

**NOAH'S DAYS
AND
CHRIST'S COMING**



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*T H I I , Author of
"Noah's Days and Christ's Coming"
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"Noah's Days and Christ's Coming.

An exposition of the impending "Glorious Appearing" of Christ; of the comparisons in Christ's Prophecies with the present and succeeding eras and the times preceding and ending with the Flood, and of the remarkable manifestations on Earth and to living mankind marking the ending of the present Dispensation.

By

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"The Climax of the Ages"

"Creation and Its Sequel"

"Behold the Bridegroom Cometh"

"But as the days of Noah, SO SHALL ALSO the Coming of the Son of Man Be (Matt. 24:37).

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Preface

Strong conviction of the impending coming of Christ, earnest longing for His coming, and sincerity of desire to set forth that believed to be the revealed "due truth" for the present era, are responsible for this work.

The remarkable likeness between the present times and living generation of mankind, and the "days of Noah" and then living mankind, makes necessary and explains the material of the first chapter of this work. The succeeding chapters will, it is hoped, further "explain," and in their materials bring the like joyous anticipation to the reader as that brought to the writer.

This work is sent forth as a confession of faith both of the one writer and of those sharing with him in its ministry and service, comprising one section of the "Church in Philadelphia."

"The Days of Noah."

Section One.

Noah was the first-born son of Lamech; Lamech was the grandson of Enoch, and son of Methuselah. Noah was born 169 years after the translation of Enoch. If Enoch had not been translated and had continued in life, he would have been 534 years of age at the birth of Noah. This has bearing on the very remarkable associations of human life, during that first age of human history. Enoch's generation, that of Noah's great-grandfather, lived for the first portion of Noah's life of four hundred years. The generation of Noah's grandfather, that of his father, that of Noah's and their children, comprised the world witnessing the building of the Ark during the final era of that Age. Four generations of adults were the "World" during "The Days of Noah."

Genesis 5th Chapter is wholly devoted to recording the genealogy of the "fathers" of the generations from Adam to Noah, and presents these as ten in numbers. Noah was thus the tenth from Adam; Enoch was, as in Jude 14, "The seventh from Adam." Noah's genealogy marks the completion of Genesis 5th Chapter, and as connecting him with the previous nine fathers. But it is only part of the summary of Noah's life, since it only traces to the birth of his three sons when Noah was 500 years old, as in verse 32: "And Noah was five hundred years old; and Noah begat Shem, Ham and Japheth." With each of the preceding nine fathers, their ages at the birth of their first-born son and the names of each of these "first-borns," is one order which obtains also with Noah's genealogy, but in varied expression.

Only the name of each of the "first-born sons" is recorded of the previous "fathers," and with this further mention of unnamed children born to each during succeed-

ing life: "And begat sons and daughters." And with eight preceding "fathers" there is this summary: "And he died," together with the record of the numbers of years of life with each at death. These matters of uniform reference with the other "fathers" the more reveal the differences with Noah's genealogy in Genesis 5:32. Like as with the previous fathers, Noah's age at the birth of offspring is recorded, but his age at that time is the first remarkable difference with the previous fathers, and is drawn attention to in the different announcement of it: "And Noah was five hundred years old." With each of the others the order is, as with the birth of Noah's father, and in Genesis 5:25: "And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech." Noah "was five hundred years old" by Divine arrangement, when his offspring came into being.

The second remarkable difference with Noah's genealogy in Genesis 5:32 to that of each of the previous nine fathers is: "And Noah begat Shem, Ham and Japheth." In this it is not even mentioned which of the three named sons was "first born," as indeed these three sons have likeness with the "first-born son" of each of the previous fathers, and not with the succeeding "sons and daughters." In the comparison with the fathers of previous generations and their "first-borns," Noah's three sons comprised a "first-born." In contrast with all the preceding fathers, the "first-born" of Noah were the only ones born of him. First-born sons of the nine fathers became the fathers of the generations of an existing World of mankind. The "first-born," and only of Noah, were the born fathers of a World of which they were the first. The naming of Noah's three sons had comparison and contrast with the "naming" only of the "first-born son" of the previous nine fathers.

Just as it was not any mere natural operation or choice that "Noah was five hundred years old" at the birth of his offspring, it was of the like manifest Divine arrangement that such "offspring" would be a "first-born," and only, and comprise "Three Sons." It is in the associations of later matters that there is the disclosing of the actual "first-born" of Noah's three sons, and which manifests

that the order in Genesis 5:32 was not that of births. In the later and different associations of Genesis 10:21 there are these words: "Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born."

The tracing of Noah's genealogy in Genesis 5:32 is to his age of 500 years at the births of his three sons, and as completing that of the ten fathers from Adam, in the line of Seth to Noah. But this, with Noah, is only introductory. Although Methuselah, Noah's grandfather, and Lamech, Noah's father, and their respective generations, were living during the times recorded in Genesis 6th Chapter, there is not the need nor fact of further mention of them in its events, to the tracings in Genesis 5th Chapter. But it is important to note and remember that the deaths of Methuselah and Lamech and their generations, recorded in Genesis 5th Chapter, transpired during the times of Genesis 6th and 7th Chapters. There is imperative need to present a second tracing of Noah's genealogy in Genesis 6th Chapter to the first in the concluding part of the preceding chapter, and as full explanation of the first.

The moral and spiritual attainments of Noah during life to the birth of his sons are not even hinted in the record of Genesis 5:32. In this regard, and apart from the recording in verses 22-24 of Enoch's "walking with God," not anything is presented in the chapter respecting the moral and spiritual with the genealogies of the ten fathers. But the second recording of the genealogy of Noah commences with the matter of his spiritual attainments and highly approved life, and thus explains the manifest Divine arrangements previously mentioned in Genesis 5:32. In Genesis 6:8 there are these words: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." The connection of this is marked in the matters of the preceding seven verses, and which will be considered in their different features later. The matter of this "finding grace in the eyes of the Lord" by Noah has the connection of a time twenty years before that of Genesis 5:32, and of the births of Noah's family of sons. Noah was 480 years of age at the era of Genesis 6:8, and when "finding grace" not available to any other living human being.

The force of Genesis 6:8 is the more manifest in its connection with the matter of verse 7: "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the Earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air." Noah was the only exception; "but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." This determined "destruction" had the time feature recorded in verse 3, where the same "man" is referred to as in verse 7, "Man universal," save Noah; "Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." The purposed "destruction of man" was to be delayed for the revealed years. This proves that the time when "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," as in Genesis 6:8, was 120 years before the Flood came. And, as in Genesis 7:11, the Flood commenced when Noah was 600 years of age, thus making him 480 when he "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." So that the era of this "finding" was twenty years before the time marked in Genesis 5:32, and before the birth of his family of sons. This had powerful bearing on their future birth.

The cause for "Noah's finding grace" is recorded in the succeeding two verses to the one which declares the fact. Genesis 6:9, 10 make the cause manifest and present a second tracing of Noah's genealogy: "These are the generations of Noah; Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth." The tracing back through the previous life of Noah to the era marked is the matter first presented in these two verses: "A just man, perfect in his generations." The future from the era marked is the matter of the other mention: "Noah walked with God; and Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth." It was during this "walk with God" that Noah learned of his coming family of "three sons," and that they became the same to him as Isaac was later to Abraham—"children of promise." Actually Noah's walking with God in regard to his promised family of "three sons," was five years longer than the time between the promise of Isaac to Abraham and his birth. As recorded in Genesis 15:4, Genesis 16:3, Abraham was 85 when the promise of Isaac was made to him, and when he had been ten years in Canaan. Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born,

as declared in Genesis 21:5. Fifteen years was the era of Abraham's waiting by faith for Isaac's birth; twenty years Noah "walked with God" in the promised birth of "three sons." This will be further considered later.

The first feature, relating to the previous life of Noah to the era when he commenced to "walk with God," is that of Genesis 6:9: "These are the generations of Noah; Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations." The use of "generations" in this verse, and to Noah only, has application to all the divisions of his previous life. As generally employed, both in Scripture and in historical works, "generation" signifies a single succession in natural descent, or people of the same period. As employed in Genesis 6:9 of Noah only and in the plural, it refers to the periods and descents of his previous life to the era then present. During each and all of these "generations" Noah's state was a "just" or justified one. It was on account of this that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" at the critical time when universal destruction was projected by God, on account of the state of universal man.

The recorded Divine Speaking in Genesis 6:3, 7 at the era marked was added to by the matter of verse 13: "And God said to Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them from the earth." This particular taking of Noah into the Divine counsels was succeeded by that of directing him to build the Ark for his own deliverance and that of his house, as in verses 14-16. At the same speaking to Noah, and as in verses 17-21, God told him of the means of the purposed "destruction of all flesh," making necessary the Ark. These are the words of verse 17: "And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under Heaven, and everything that is in the earth shall die."

In this exclusive mention of the Flood to Noah, and for the first time, its universal extent over the earth and not any mere local flooding, was revealed and emphasised. A striking matter of later reference is that of designating this universal Flood by the name of Noah, as in Isaiah 54:9, and connected with a previous promise recorded in Genesis 8:21,

which reads thus: "Neither will I again smite any more every living thing, as I have done." The reference in Isaiah 54:9 is associated with God's unchanging promise to His people of Israel: "For this is as the waters of Noah to Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee." This "swearing" is the matter of Genesis 9: 8, 9.

Not until the reality of the Flood came in the experience of Noah and those with him in the Ark was full realisation of its immensity possible. The speaking to Noah recorded in Genesis 6:17, and fully believed by him, did not specify such immensities as later experience brought, in the twelve months' travelling in the Ark upon the universal waters. The description of the immensity of the Flood in Genesis 7:18-20 is much more particular in details than the forecast to Noah in Genesis 6:17, and fully believed by him: "And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the Ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole Heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward (27 feet) did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered." As some of these hills and mountains are over five miles high from the surface of the earth, the immensity of the Flood is the more displayed by the reference to them, as also the particular height of the waters above the highest of them, "fifteen cubits upward."

Most Commentators favour the theory of a "partial or local Flood," in spite of the definite declarations of Scripture of its universal character. This is the position of the ones who believe that the records of the Flood are historical, but regard its "universal" nature as in conflict with the conclusions of modern science on the shape of the earth and other matters. This is one of many matters proving that it is impossible to have right ideas on things revealed in the Scriptures, apart from understanding of the basis of all Divine revelation, in the Genesis account of Creation. The Scriptures are all harmonious on the matter of a universal Flood; any difficulties in this regard arise from without them, and not from within them.

In the Divine speaking to Noah on the day marking the era from which the 120 years' respite were counted, there is in Genesis 6:18 the mention of his promised "sons" in the regard of future entry into the Ark. Moreover, in the same there is the first reference to "thy sons' wives" as sharing in the entry into the Ark at its completion 120 years later. "But with thee will I establish My covenant; and thou shalt come into the Ark; thou and thy sons; and thy wife; and thy sons' wives with thee." In this confident forecast there was the clear explanation of the ones on whose account the Ark was to be built. The previous matter of verses 9, 10, as to how many "sons" were to be born, made fully manifest how many were included in "thy sons' wives" in verse 18, and also **unborn** at the time of speaking this forecast.

But in the same speaking, as in Genesis 6:18, the matter of his sons and their "wives" entering the Ark 120 years later emphasises the relationships of these six as those of minors, and not as responsible adults.* Not any of these six are referred to as having the right to enter the Ark, such as Noah had, but only as entering on account of **Noah**. The fact of being **Noah's** sons would have availed nothing if they had been responsible adults. Their own faith or unbelief would have determined their entrance or exclusion from the Ark, as they did with **Noah's** wife, and which will be manifest later. Not having any personal right to enter the Ark themselves, hindered **Noah's** sons from taking into the Ark the "wives" referred to in Genesis 6:18. **Noah's** sons were to enter the Ark as **his** sons, and not as **husbands** of wives. This matter is the cause for the careful wording of the 18th verse, and which may even be regarded as "peculiar, if not rightly understood."

"And thou shalt come into the Ark," is the first feature revealed and stressed, and which concentrates only on **Noah**. It was **his** "just" state that made possible the promised deliverance by the Ark 120 years later. The second feature mentions **Noah** again, but this time in association with others. "Thou and thy sons" is the second feature, and which emphasises that only by being "**his** sons" and on his account could they enter.. Passing over for the time being the third feature (and thy wife), the fourth feature pre-

sents Noah again, in the regard of entering the Ark in association with others: "And thy sons' wives with thee." Noah's sons had to be taken in by their father, and the same taking in by Noah of their "wives" was the only cause of their entrance. Noah and not his sons was to take into the Ark these three wives, and thus include them in his house: "Thou and thy sons; and thy sons' wives with thee."

It was "Noah's house" that the Ark was to deliver, as in Hebrews 11:7: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his house." Marriage, in every case, marks the commencement of a new house, and separation from the previous one of birth and minority; Christ's words in Matthew 19:5 were emphasising God's word in the Garden of Eden at the first Marriage, as in Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." This "leaving" is that of passing from the minor state of obeying father and mother. Not until Noah's house had been delivered from the Flood and on to the restored earth could three other houses be established and blessed by God.

Interesting features of the forecasted entry into the Ark are presented in the accounts of that entry. An indicated in Genesis 7:1, it was necessary for God to invite Noah and his house into the Ark at its completion, as Genesis 8:15, 16 records the same with the leaving of the Ark after the Flood: "Come thou and all thy house into the Ark," is the first; "Go forth of the Ark" is the matter of the second. And exactly the same order of entering and leaving the Ark as in the forecast in Genesis 6:18 is recorded in Genesis 7:7, Genesis 8:18: "And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the Ark." And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him." There was the like necessity for Noah's taking his sons and their wives out of the Ark, as for the previous taking them in some twelve months before.

Not only during the first age down to the Flood, but also during later times marked in sacred history, marriage was not a matter of ceremony, either legal or religious, per-

formed by others, as it is in modern times. Marriage in general during those early days consisted in the interested parties taking each other in plighted troth to be husband and wife. Even during the days of the "Law and Prophet" in Israel there is not any hint of any legal or religious ceremonies associated with marriage. With the "Elders," or God's faithful people, marriage was associated with seeking the Divine approval and blessing, and in some revealed cases, such as that of Isaac and Jacob, was directly of Divine arrangement only.

Assuredly God was solely responsible for the first marriage, in the Garden of Eden, and which was anticipated in the summary in Genesis 1:28, together with the later Divine speaking as in Genesis 2:24: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it." Not until the sons of Noah left the Ark on account of their father's standing did God address them for the first time, and in exactly the same words as at the first marriage. In Genesis 9:1 there are these words: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." This marked the marriages of Noah's sons, as it did the commencement of three houses out of the members of Noah's house.

The revealed truth that Noah's faith was the cause of the saving of his house of minors has important bearing on the Divine appointments of human life and society during the closing era of 120 years. It was imperative that not any other "minors" would be alive when the Flood came. This in turn required that not any others save the six of Noah's house would be born during that era. God's ways are just and righteous. If any other "minors" had been living when the Flood came they, too, like the six of Noah's house, must have been taken by Noah into the Ark. As in Acts 10:34, "God is no respecter of persons." A responsible word of adults were the subjects of Divine operations during that closing era. Not any save the six of Noah's house were born at an early portion of it, and growing up during its course.. This feature of hindering any births, save those of three boys and three girls, for 120 years was

with **thee**." But Noah is not mentioned in the third clause of the verse. "**And thy wife**" is the condensed matter of the third clause, and has the like imperative "**shall come**" involved in it, as with Noah in the first clause. Noah's wife **could not** be associated with her husband as his sons and their wives **must be** in regard to entering the Ark. To enter at all required that she must have the like faith with her husband and enter on that basis. Human estimates might easily suggest that the order of the verse would be as follows: "**Thou shalt enter the Ark; thou and thy wife, and thy sons.**" But the Divine estimates are those **expressed**: "**Thou and thy sons; and thy wife.**"

These three words, "**and thy wife**," in such connections as those of the forecast and guarantee in Genesis 6:18, serve to draw aside the veil of obscurity otherwise obtaining with the previous life, and then present standing of Noah's **wife**. If she had not been a sharer of his "**just state and perfect generations**" previous to this forecast, she **could not** have been included with Noah in it and in its "**guarantee**." The married life of these two, down to the era of respite, is thus shown as that of Genesis 6:9, even though only Noah is mentioned, "**just and perfect in generations.**" And the isolated mention of Noah, in verse 8, included "**thy wife**," since she shared with him by her faith in it. "**But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord,**" isolated him from all others **save "thy wife."** There cannot be any question as to **Who** arranged the marriage of those two centuries before the era of respite. And the same **One** "**knew**" the state of heart of the wife as of Noah during those previous centuries, and included wife and husband in "**committing Himself**" in guarantees to both. "**Thou shalt come into the Ark . . . and thy wife.**"

With his wife as with Noah, God's revealed estimate was formed from the known existing state of heart, and which had also obtained during the times of life preceding and would **continue** during the era then commencing. As with Christ's guarantee to His Apostles, so with God's guarantee to Noah and his wife. These two **had continued in His fellowship** during then past times; both "**found grace in the eyes of the Lord**" on this account at the commencement of the closing era, and both would for certain be faithful through that era.

The guarantee, in Genesis 6:18, that Noah's wife would for certain enter the Ark at its completion 120 years later, intimated that the then coming years would not cause her faith to falter. It also indicated that her faith was real at the time of the forecast, as it had been in previous times. God "knew" when giving His guarantee, that Noah's wife, like her husband, would for certain continue "Steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," without the least danger of "falling away." In speaking to Noah His estimate of the standing and certain prospects of the two, husband and wife, a new cause for joy and peace to both was provided. God's spoken estimate of them, and guarantee to both, placed their home on a basis even more peaceful and joyous than in previous times. Whatever the indifference, scorn, or any degree of hostility, without their "house," there was intensified joy, peace, confidence, and fellowship within, as the result of God's spoken estimate and guarantee. All the fellowship required by Noah and his wife was within their "house," and with the one daily uppermost in all its exercises. Daily remembrances of God's spoken estimates and guarantees made life to be free from all care and anxiety, and new, delightful, in all its experiences.

Divine "foreknowledge" manifested in the guarantees to Noah and his wife, as in Genesis 6:18, is always based on the like basis of "Knowing what is in man," and never operates apart from this righteous basis. It was to the one state in Noah and his wife that God spake His guarantees, as it was to the like "state" in the Apostles that Christ gave His guarantees. Thus, all in that "state" share in the Divine guarantees of certain success in His service. The one requirement to sharing the guarantees given by God and Christ to individuals in the like "state," is that of entering in to the faith of Noah and his wife, of the Apostles and all the true people of God. The one requirement to certain inclusion in the imperative in such Scriptures as Matt. 5:8, is that of being in the state specified: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." So in the beautiful words addressed to some: "In Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy" (Revelation 3:4). And such other Scriptures, as Hebrews 6:17, 18, are particularly de-

signed to arouse the responsive state of heart required to obtain God's guarantees, and to remove all fear and anxiety from the daily walk of faith: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the Hope set before us."

Section Two.

As already noted, the genealogy of Methuselah and Lamech, in Genesis 5:25-31, concluding with each, "And he died," is anticipating these "deaths" during the era of 120 years traced in the two succeeding chapters. But, that of Noah in Genesis 5:32 does not "anticipate" Noah's death, but only traces to his age of 500 years at the birth of his family of sons. Of necessity the second presenting of Noah's genealogy in Genesis 6:8-10, and in different connections to the first, could not, as it does not make any reference to Noah's death. Not until the stage of events on Earth, marked in Genesis 9:28, 29, is there the completion of Noah's genealogy from the first mention of this in Genesis 5:32: "And Noah lived after the Flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died."

Between the use, in Genesis 5:25-31, of "and he died" to Methuselah and Lamech (grandfather and father of Noah), and its use with Noah in Genesis 9:28, 29, the only other reference to "death" is that of Genesis 7:21: "And all flesh died that moved upon the Earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth, and every man." This proves that Methuselah and Lamech, in their individual meeting with death, were the only exceptions of living adult mankind: "All flesh died; every man." These "all flesh; every man" met death in the one visitation.

The individual deaths of Methuselah and Lamech transpired before the Flood, but during the era of 120 years reaching to it. In thus "dying" these two fathers were the only exceptions amongst living mankind. The suspension of death was another Sign of the like character as that of hindering births, with the exceptions of two with

the first and six with the second. And these "exceptions" further confirmed the significance of the prevailing order. The suspension of death was as necessary as that of births. The universal test was that of the right of continued life on Earth, or the forfeiting of the right, together with the primary one of testing in regard to Celestial inheritance in Eternal Life. A World of adults were the subjects of the test.

The individual deaths of Methuselah and Lamech during this universal test marked an exceptional feature. The fact of their deaths during the era of testing proved their unfitness for deliverance, hence their inclusion among the unjust World. Not any provision was made for either of these fathers in the Ark, since at its commencement they were excluded from the standing of Noah, referred to in Genesis 6:8, and included in the universal one of verse 7: "I will destroy man whom I have created. . . . But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," not Methuselah nor Lamech nor any of their generations. The Ark was to be erected for the two "finding grace" at that era and their "House" unborn, and not for any others, not even for possible converts during the succeeding 120 years. There was not any room in the Ark save for eight persons, as in 1st Peter 3:20: "Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water." Methuselah and Lamech did not "find grace in the eyes of the Lord" at the time when the Ark was commenced. And their later individual deaths during the course of its erection, while exceptional, proved that they had not "found grace in the eyes of the Lord" then.

But their individual deaths, and isolated, marked discrimination not extended even to others of their own generations, in hindering destruction by the Flood. This "discrimination" with the two fathers could not have been on their own account, since they shared the state of all others of the World, and not that of Noah. Noah's state must have been the cause for Divine permission of death from natural causes with these two fathers, instead of, as with all others, destruction by the Flood. But not even Noah's brothers and sisters, nor his kindred in the generations of Methuselah and Lamech, could be included in this "discrimination" of the two fathers. This suggests degrees of the prevailing state in that World, and that the two fathers

were the least culpable of living mankind. Some illustration of the principle operating in this matter is provided in that outlined in Genesis 19:29: "And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered **Abraham**, and sent **Lot** out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which **Lot dwelt.**" It is necessary to read, also, the reference in 2nd Peter 2:7, 8 to rightly understand the whole subject treated in both.

"And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous man dwelling among them, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." The "just and righteous" state of Lot referred to consisted solely in being free from the beastly state of the people of Sodom, and of abhorring this. But Lot's "dwelling" among such people from mere mercenary reasons, and not spiritual ones, would have included him in their destruction if God had not "**remembered Abraham**" and his faith. By comparison with the people of Sodom Lot is referred to as "just and righteous"; by comparison with the state of Abraham Lot was not either, but needed to be delivered on account of **Abraham**. If Lot had shared in the abominations of Sodom, not even Abraham's approved state would have availed for his deliverance. Manifestly, the like principle operated on account of Noah's state, in the preserving from destruction by the Flood and the removal by natural causes of the two fathers. Others of the kindred of Noah could not be included with these fathers, because their state was a more culpable one.

Methuselah was the oldest in years of the ten fathers in the line of Seth, and Lamech, the father of Noah and son of Methuselah, was the youngest of these, save the translated Enoch. It is manifest that Lamech's life, as also that of all his generation, was shortened considerably to what it would have been by the events ending in the Flood. This same could hardly obtain with Methuselah and his generation. The fact of allowing Methuselah and his generation to continue in life during the final era of 120 years, of not permitting them as a generation to finish their lives before the opening of the closing era, is striking. Methuselah's generation had been the privileged subjects—

with other preceding generations—of the 200 years of Enoch's ministry to his translation. As indicated in Jude 14:15, during that ministry Enoch had preached the "Second Coming and Kingdom of Christ." And as marked in Genesis 5:22-24, the birth of Methuselah, his "first-born son," was the era when Enoch commenced his "Walk with God" in the matters of his ministry, ending 200 years later in translation, or when "God took him."

Methuselah was greatly privileged to be eldest son of such a devout man of God, as he and all his generation were to share with others in his lengthy and enlightening ministry. But, clearly Enoch's ministry had not profited his son Methuselah nor his generation. This matter may have had bearing on the Divine bringing of Methuselah and his generation into the final era, and its universal testing, instead of allowing them all to die before it commenced. The fact of their presence in life at that era is definitely marked. The Author Version of Genesis 5:30, 31 presents the age of Lamech at his death as 777 years, and which would locate his death as taking place five years before the Flood, or, as in verse 30, 595 years after the birth of Noah.

In Genesis 5:25-27 there are the times of Methuselah, and which indicate his age at the birth of Noah as 369 years, and his death 600 years later, and in the year of the Flood. Noah was 600 years old when Methuselah was 969 years, and, as revealed in Genesis 7:11, this was between six and seven weeks before the Flood. (The particulars of all these matters provided arrest the attention, as they are so important in the Divine estimate.) "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of Heaven were opened." From this detailed matter in conjunction with the genealogy in Genesis 5:25-27, it is clear that Methuselah died 47 days before the Flood commenced, and when Noah was 600 years old.

The Divine purpose in revealing the two sources of the waters of the Flood is for the enlightened faith of all those desiring to be His people, as in all other matters of His revelation. As commented previously in the regard of the universal extent of the Flood, so with the revealed

sources of its waters. Only by understanding of the Divine Word of Creation and utterly discarding opposing theories of men miscalled "Scientific," is it possible to believe the Divine record as to the sources of the Flood waters. It is in vain that God gave such detailed information in this regard and for human faith, where His Word is put aside on account of being "**unscientific**," and merely "**poetical**." God knows more concerning His works than any mortal, and any true knowledge obtained by mortals concerning His works **must** be gathered from His enlightening Word. And such "**knowledge**" is proved wisdom by the **works of** God all around confirming His Word.

In Genesis 1:7, 8 there is the record of the Divine making of a "**Firmament**," a material work for the enclosing of the Earth. In the same verses, also in verse 6, there is the declaring of the "**waters above** the Firmament, and the **waters under**—or beneath—it," on the surface of the earth. In all references in the Scriptures to "**rain**" there is invariably the mention of "**Heaven**" as its one source. And in such Scriptures as Isaiah 55:10 there is the anticipating and answering of the foolish theories of men, in conflict with the Divine Word and the facts of the Divine works: "**For as the rain cometh down**, and the snow from **Heaven**, and returneth not thither, but watereth the Earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the **sower and bread to the eater**." Not only does all rain come from Heaven, but after coming on to the Earth and its waters, it **remains**, and is not taken up and sent down by any processes designated in human theories, "**condensation and evaporation**." All rain is from Heaven and from the "**waters above the firmament**." And in Genesis 7:11 the **One** Who made them declares that there are "**Windows in Heaven**" through which all rain comes, and **Faith** accepts His word.

The other revealed source of the waters of the Flood mentioned in Genesis 7:11, fountains of the **great deep**, also becomes intelligible from connected Scriptures. The "**Great Deep**" is beneath the Earth. Waters "**under the Earth**" comprise this, and are referred to in such Scriptures as Exodus 20:4; Psalm 24:1, 2; Psalm 136:6. These unthinkably vast areas of waters under the earth are the resting

place of the earth for eternity, and in such other Scriptures as Job 38: 47, Psalm 104: 5, the immense "foundations" enclosing the waters are referred to as the "foundations of the earth."

The use of the term "Waters of Noah" in Isaiah 54:9 and of the Flood not only distinguishes it from all other local floods, but also from a previous universal Flood on the earth at the ending of the first Creation. In 2nd Peter 3: 5, 6, there is reference to this "previous Flood of waters, and its destruction of the first Heaven and earth with all their inhabitants. Not any Heavens nor earth were destroyed with "the waters of Noah," and eight persons were preserved alive. There was not any Ark in the associations of that first universal Flood. A direct connection with it is presented in Genesis 1:2, 9, and in the "seas" on the existing earth. As indicated in these verses, the whole surface of the earth was covered with the waters when God commenced to make the second earth for human history. The Divine directing of these waters into the one "place," and designating them "seas," provided to human sight the waters of the previous universal Flood. The "seas" testify to that first Flood.

There is a further connection in this regard. In Isaiah 54:9 there is reference to "the waters of Noah" not again covering the earth. Divine wisdom deemed it necessary to also reveal that the "seas" will not again cover the earth, as they did at the era of Genesis 1:2, 9. It is to this and not to "the waters of Noah" that there is reference in Job 38:8-11, Psalm 104:8, 9: "Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth."

Section Three.

In Genesis, as in the New Testament references to the Flood in the days of Noah, there is the revealing and stressing of living mankind as its subjects. In Genesis 6: 5, 7, 12, 13, 17, and at the era when God determined and revealed the matter of a projected Flood, living mankind are referred to as its subjects in differing terms. "World" is the term employed in the same regard in Hebrews 11:7, 2nd Peter 2:5. Only in Genesis 6-7 chapters, and not in New Testament references, is there the mention of any other crea-

tures saved in the Ark, save the eight of Noah's house. Of necessity the physical geography of the earth, associated with the "world" of that era, is that of Genesis 2-7 chapters, of things before the Flood, and greatly altered by it. The obliteration of the Garden of Eden was but one of many material changes made by the Flood in the extensive area of the inhabited earth of that age.

"**Eden**" is the name recorded of the district, country, area, of the world before and at the time of the Flood, together with an adjoining district on the East, where Cain and his people went after, and as a result of the death of Abel, as in Genesis 4:16. This banishment of Cain from the district of "**Eden**" resulted in the dividing of mankind for revealed times into two sections, Cainites and Sethites. The tracing of the genealogy of the Cainites to the seventh generation, in Genesis 4:17-22, agrees with recorded conditions of moral degeneracy amongst the Sethites, in the times of Enoch, "the seventh from Adam" in the line of Seth. All barriers between the two sections were broken down; living humanity were the one "world," the all flesh to whom the final era of 120 years' respite marked the limit of life, save as there was repentance and reformation. The Divine word to Noah at the marking of that closing era included mankind universal, as in Genesis 6:13: "The end of **all flesh** is come before me. I will destroy them from the earth."

The continuance of the Garden of Eden (East in the district of **Eden**, as in Genesis 2:8), down to the Flood, presents an important key to the introducing of the closing era. The "**Cherubim**" at its entrance, recorded in Genesis 3:24, were the manifestation of the Divine presence. The recorded Divine speaking with Cain and Abel, in Genesis 4:3, 7, was through the "**Cherubim**." The Divine appeals to **Cain** as to Abel have powerful bearing on His methods of teaching right through that age. God spake to man by His own voice and not by written matter, and to **all men**, and not only to the Abel class, the faithful. The only human preachers of that lengthy first age finding mention in the Scriptures were Enoch and Noah. Enoch was in the seventh generation, and Noah in the tenth. Enoch's preaching was for the last 200 years of his life, and Noah's for the 120 years of the closing era. But God's speaking ob-

tained continuously from the times of Cain and Abel to the commencing of the final era. And it was by this Divine speaking that each generation was advised of the requirements for His approval, and of the things that "grieved" Him in those walking contrary to His Word spoken to them.

As later revealed in Romans 5:13, 14, and not in Genesis, the methods of "grace" during that first age did not permit any threats nor the inflicting of particular judgments, even on the most wilful sinners. Only the sharing of death as a consequence of the first man's sin, and not any added infliction preceding, could, by the order of that age, be placed on sinners. "For until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law; nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's sin." Grace, and not Law, obtained for the first age, and "grace" does not command, but appeals for faith and loving service.

The universal state of mankind at the era marked in Genesis, 6th chapter, was that of "evil continually," as in verse 5, and in verse 12, that "all flesh had corrupted His way on the earth." Different methods to the previous ones were required and instituted at that era, and which, of necessity, must be notified by God's speaking to all the universal subjects before they could be amenable to the new methods. God could not, by His own previous methods, bring a universal judgment upon all flesh, apart from advising all these and providing time and opportunity for improvement for repentance and a real change of life. Bible expositors generally conclude that only Noah was directly advised by God as to His determination to "destroy all flesh," and the appointed 120 years' respite, and that the world was notified of this through Noah's preaching. Genesis does not even record any preaching by Noah, but only the later and fuller records in the New Testament. Not only was Divine speaking the one order of that first age throughout its course, but it was imperatively necessary in the introduction of the final era with its new methods. It was the sinful world, and not Noah and his wife, that made necessary the projected destruction of "all flesh," and so needed to be Divinely advised of this.

In Genesis 6:3, 7 there is the recorded Divine speaking two messages inseparably connected, and as preceding His speaking to Noah, as in verses 13-21, and marked with these words as its commencement: "And God said unto Noah." Not any such particular is added in the speaking in verses 3, 7. "And the Lord said" is the commencement with these. As further marking the exactness of the Inspired Word in its definitions, and together with the recorded speaking to Cain in Genesis 4:6 ("And the Lord said unto Cain"), there is the matter of Genesis 8:29: "And the Lord said within His heart," and not to any listeners. The inclusion of all to be affected by the new methods projected made unnecessary any mention of the numbers of the ones addressed in the Divine speaking recorded in Genesis 6:3,7, and which included with all others Noah and his wife. In the second speaking by God, recorded in verses 13-21, Noah was the only one addressed, and the only one advised of the particular matters comprised in that second speaking, and additional to the universal first speaking.

The revealed fact of the universal speaking by God in the two matters of Genesis 6:3, 7, and of later speaking through Noah's preaching, serves to manifest His "just and true ways" and to remove all causes for doubting these. Not only with the world of Noah's days, but also with that of Christ's Coming, these dual speakings have powerful significance. Nothing could be more just, merciful and righteous, nor more calculated to arouse and convince than God's ways pursued for that era of respite.

The Divine speaking recorded in Genesis 6:3, 7 was one message in two parts spoken on the one day marked in them. The rendering of verse 3 in the Septuagint version is less ambiguous than in the Authorised: "And the Lord God said, My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men for ever, because they are flesh, but their days shall be **an hundred and twenty years.**" This announced time limit to human life was made more manifest as to causes by the added message of verse 7: "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them." The world of mankind responsible for this "determination" was

the one addressed by God. But in this fulness there were also marked reservations, such as the means of the purposed "destruction," and the required course to make it unnecessary.

Not anything was said in this universal speaking of "a Flood of waters," nor of an "Ark" for deliverance of some of living mankind. These two matters were inseparable, and God could only reveal them to Noah and through him to the world. Noah's faith and obedience were required for the building of the Ark, hence God could not speak to the world of this until Noah proved his faith "by his works." And the **Ark** was the most powerful mode of speaking possible, as to the designed means of the "destruction" announced universally. It was on account of Noah being the only living "just man" at that era that he was instructed to build the **Ark**, and advised of the coming "Flood of waters." It is by the aid of New Testament references and not from Genesis that we learn of Noah's preaching and its themes. But it is in Genesis 6:3, 7 that there is the record of the Divine **preaching** to universal mankind, and its themes.

The revealed truth of the world, and not only Noah being notified by God's voice of the commencement and exact length of the final era, the more manifests the enlightenment imparted universally as a basis of faith. Believing God's word heard by all mankind was a reasonable result to hearing it, and would have prepared all thus believing for Noah's preaching of the reasonable requirements by God for the putting aside of the threatened destruction. This duality, God's preaching and Noah's preaching, must be understood both in regard to the visitation of the Flood, and New Testament references having connection with it and with parallel days to Christ's coming. In Christ's references to the Flood and the "days of Noah," He reveals matters absent in Genesis. One of these is in Matt. 24:39, and reads: "And knew not until the Flood came and took them all away." In this mention of that which is not recorded in Genesis there is an addition to that which is recorded, and not any alteration of it. All that world "knew" of God's speaking of the commencement and length of the final era; they "knew" of the building of the **Ark**;

they "knew" the themes of Noah's preaching. In all these it was impossible for them not to "know" that which their ears had heard and their eyes seen. The matter of "**knew not**" in Christ's words in Matt. 24:39 and of "the days of Noah," is presented as "**culpable**," and not as a misfortune or lack of evidence.

It was **the time** which they "knew not," and this through unbelief of God's voice telling that "time" at its commencement, and its exact length. Not until the Flood **came** did they believe the word of God spoken in their hearing 120 years before. This was culpable ignorance, and finds illustration in Christ's address to Israel at the close of His ministry, as in Luke 19:41-44: "Because thou **knewest not the time** of thy visitation," is the summary of the mention of all the neglected privileges of the ministry then ending. It was the experiencing of the very "destruction" that God had told the world, that brought "**knowing**" which ought to have obtained for 120 years.

The Divine speaking to Noah succeeding that to all mankind; but on the same eventful day, took him into the Divine counsels on matters reserved from the universal message. There was first and, as in Genesis 6:13, the further mention of the purposed destruction of all flesh, previously announced, as in verse 7. The significance of this second mention to Noah will be considered later. The fact of it being a second to the first of verse 7, and spoken only to Noah, is to be noted here: "And God said unto **Noah**, The end of all flesh is come before me . . . and, behold, I will destroy them from the earth." The second matter of this speaking, verse 14, was the new feature: "Make thee an **Ark** of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the **Ark**, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." Even before revealing the means of universal destruction—flood waters—God spake of the means of Noah's preservation, such was His estimate of Noah's state of faith. But in this there was also the matter of further testing of Noah's state, in the requirement for **Noah** to "make" the means of his own deliverance, and not that God would make it. Noah was to build the **Ark**, not God. And notwithstanding previous faith and devotion, deliverance from that to come

upon the world was dependent with Noah on his faith and obedience in the regard of "Make thee an Ark."

Noah's faith in and obedience to this command had universal results, and which did not obtain with his "just" state at the era when the Ark commenced. •Noah was justified because of his state, and the world was condemned because of their state, both connected with the previous course of life with each. But the building of the Ark introduced another comparison and contrast, referred to in Hebrews 11:7: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world." In this there is mention only of Noah's being "warned of God of things not seen as yet," and not of the world also receiving the same "warning," although this is involved. It was by faith in the Divine Word spoken to him that Noah built the Ark, and this "condemned the world" for their unbelief of the Divine Word spoken to them, as well as unbelief in Noah's preaching of the Word of God given him.

Although Genesis 6:22, Genesis 7:1, suggest that the preparing of the Ark occupied the whole of the era of 120 years, the reference in 1st Peter 3:20 is most definite in this as in other regards: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing." God's long-suffering continued for the appointed 120 years, and this was the exact time of "the preparing of the Ark." This "preparing" was more than erecting it. There was much to do after the Ark was erected before it was "prepared" for its inmates. And in Genesis 6:21, that which succeeded the erecting and finishing of the Ark itself is recorded, and which completed its "preparing" on the last day of the 120 years. "And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be food for thee, and for them." The immensity of this final "preparing" was the end to a greater immensity in erecting the Ark. It may have been that Methuselah before his death—forty-seven days before the Ark was fully "prepared" and entered—saw the completed Ark itself. But it is certain that Noah's father, Lamech, did not.

"Make thee an Ark of gopher wood" was the exact command to Noah, as in Genesis 6:14. It was as necessary for him to be told what "wood" to use as every other detail of this new and extraordinary matter. Although Genesis 6:14 is the only reference in the Hebrew employing "gopher," its radical letters are the same as "Cypress, resinous wood," light, and not subject to rot. The other particulars in verses 15, 16 were general ones, requiring such details for guidance as Noah must have received from the great "Architect." It is in verse 17 and succeeding the particulars of the Ark that God revealed to Noah both the need for it and the destructive means with all flesh. And although the forecast in this verse is sufficiently comprehensive to cover the subject of the universal Flood, many features were left for the reality to make manifest. "And, behold, I, even I, do bring a Flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven, and everything that is in the earth shall die."

It was because of the revealed universal area of the Flood that there was necessity for Noah's building of the Ark. A vessel that could ride the waters was the only possible way of escape. It was impossible for Noah and his wife to remove from the country of Eden into some other part of the earth, and so escape the Flood. As declared to Noah by God, as in Genesis 6:17, the Flood of waters was to "Destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under Heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die." The terms "under Heaven and in the earth" were all-embracing. The only possible way of safety was removal from the earth and on top of the Flood waters. But in erecting the means of this escape for himself and his house, Noah was to be an example to the world, both of a "faith that works by love," and of self-sacrifice. Noah had been an example to all others in his "just" state down to this closing era. But the building of the Ark presented him in another and different kind. The requirements from Noah were far greater in proving his faith and obedience than from the world as proving theirs and of a different kind.

Only Noah was commanded to perform the costly and stupendous work of building the massive Ark, a vessel of some 42,000 tons burden. Only he was instructed to deliver by "preaching" the Divine requirements from the World, for the setting aside of the purposed destruction of all flesh. These dual services claimed all Noah's time and resources, as, indeed, it is remarkable that he was able to accomplish both and to be faithful in each. The fact of Noah's financial ability to perform the costly erection of the Ark, to provision it for twelve months with the great varieties of food for the diverse creatures to enter it, is one striking feature. His ready and glad willingness to use that "ability," as also the loyal consent of his wife in the same regard, is another. Noah and his wife must surely have invested all that they had in the immense undertaking of "preparing" the Ark, if, indeed, they could finance it with their "all," and apart from some particular help from Him upon Whom they trusted for everything.

Although Noah was the only one commanded to build an Ark, there was not any necessity to warn others not to build arks for their houses. Noah had not any competitors in the costly and self-sacrificing work given him. If God had required from every other man the like work of faith as Noah's, the testing of that world would have been far more exacting than it was. The immense proportions of the Ark, the fact that the greater part of its internal space and arrangements were for earthly creatures outside of the human species, presented the need for unselfishness with Noah in a particular way. God required from Noah the provision for saving alive "pairs" of all other species of earthly creatures, as well as for the "three pairs" of the human species to be the parents of the coming human race. This "provision" was placed before Noah by God, apart from apology for its necessity, as it was received and obeyed by Noah apart from any protest or suggestion of imposition.

This immense and diversified family in the Ark, saved by Noah's building of their means of deliverance, presents his house as a much bigger one than that of "eight persons." And in the same regard, Noah and his wife filled a bigger place as parents or guardians of the coming in-

habitants of the earth than Adam and Eve did at the beginning of human history. The three human pairs shared with all the other "pairs" in the "keeping" recorded in Genesis 6:20: "Two of every sort shall come unto thee to keep them alive." Adam and Eve had not such life-giving services placed upon them, not even with their own species, much less with all the "pairs" of irrational creatures, "to keep them alive."

The most complete instructions in regard to the design, size, and internal as well as external arrangements of the Ark, were imperatively required by Noah from God. Neither Noah nor any other living man knew anything about ships or their building. A ship was indeed a new thing, outside of any human experience. Trading, commerce, exploration and war, associated with and inseparable from "ships," were all absent from the experiences of mankind of that first age. It only requires that we apprehend the position of affairs at the era under consideration to recognise the astonishment of Noah, when told of the designed means of deliverance from the projected Flood. Universal waters, and a ship to ride upon them, were the respective means revealed to him. The "waters" were to be the "means" of universal destruction; the "ship," the Ark, was the "means" of deliverance. The fact and extent of the one "means"—of a universal Flood—was reflected in the fact and proportions of the other "means"—an immense ship. Within quite recent times of the inventive era of the 19th and 20th centuries, ships of five thousand tons burden were regarded as massive, and when reaching ten to twenty thousands of tons burden were objects of wondering interest. But the "ship" that the one man, Noah, was commanded to build, and did build, was approximately 42,000 tons burden, and assuredly, since it was the only one ever designed to Divine plans and details, was unlike any later one. It was the first "ship" ever built, and the only one of its kind. As indicated in the different "cubits" in Genesis 6:15, 16, the Ark was 547 feet in length, 91 feet broad, and 54 feet in height in its three stories. The Ark was without masts and rudder, and had a covering roof. The only concern of Noah and his seven assistants was within the Ark, and not with the Ark and its course.

It is certain that if Noah had been consulted as to the most suitable means for the destruction of all flesh, and the preserving of those appointed for deliverance from it, the universal Flood and the massive Ark would never have occurred to him. The Divine purpose in the Flood comprised far more than the destruction of all life (save that of the delivered ones) and which required that it must be universal. Great alterations all over the surface of the earth, preparing for human history in all its parts, and great changes in the conditions of human life to those of the first age resulting in the shortening of individual life, are some manifest results of the universal Flood. The fact of, possibly half of, the Flood waters coming from under the earth, must have resulted in the whole earth being lowered within the enclosed material firmament some two and a half miles, and within its enclosing "foundations."

The inevitable surprise of Noah, at receiving the Divine speaking of the Flood and the Ark, must have been duplicated with every other living person when Noah commenced and continued the erection of the Ark. Building a ship on dry land was indeed a sight calculated to arouse universal wonder with those never previously seeing a ship. But it was, also, actually a continuation of the universal message of Genesis 6:3, 7 spoken by God. The Ark was the explanation of the era of verse 3, and of the "destruction" of verse 7. The Ark told of that which was to fill in the era of 120 years, as it did that which was to come at the end of them. We know, both from the account of Genesis and New Testament references, that from its commencement the Ark was the centre of universal interest. The locating of living mankind in the one centre permitted, without undue difficulty, the seeing of the Ark in course of erection by every living human being as designed by God.

But a matter arising out of New Testament references, considered in a later chapter of this work, is this: When Noah was told of the purposed universal Flood, and the world later told of the same by him, the first surprise of Noah was succeeded by his recognition of it as a duplicate of a previous Flood on the first earth. This matter made the preaching of Noah and his building of the Ark to have further emphasis by universal knowledge of the previous Flood as an "object lesson."

Quite apart from any preaching by Noah, and which could only commence after the Ark commenced, there was, with God's previous universal speaking, abundance of evidence as a basis of reformation and faith in the material witness of the Ark. With the world, **believing** in that witness was all that was required. With Noah, **building** the Ark, and active and continued preaching, made much more exacting the Divine requirements, but which were "**easy**" to Noah, because of loving faith filling his heart. It was not possible for any living person not to know of the erection of the Ark, and not to know **what** was signified by it. It was, as in Hebrews 11:7, by faith concerning "**Things not seen as yet**" that Noah commenced and continued the Ark. And the Ark **itself** testified the like "**things not seen as yet**" to every living human being. It told of **coming waters**, and of itself as the only means of escape, and it compelled attention.

But the Ark was also, and by the aid of Noah's preaching, a witness of the Divine requirements from the world. This feature is not recorded in the Genesis account, but it is in the New Testament. There is not any mention in Genesis either of Noah's preaching nor of the Divine "**waiting**" for reformation and faith from universal mankind. Noah was the example for all others really desiring to escape the Flood and to be in Divine fellowship. Noah proved his faith by his works (as commended in James 2:17, 18). The proofs by works of the faith of all others were, of necessity, of a different kind to those of Noah. Only he was commanded the costly and immense work of building the Ark, because Noah was the only "**just man**" living at that era, and the Ark was for his deliverance and that of his house, and his justification to Celestial glory.

If any others had set about to build Arks for their houses, which not any did, such would have manifested unbelief and disobedience in doing the same as Noah did in obedient faith. **God's word is the basis of obedient faith.** God only commanded and required **one** Ark. He solicited from all the world much less than building Arks for themselves. His Way was easy and His burden light.

Section Four.

As previously considered and manifest from the recorded universal Divine speaking in Genesis 6:3, 7, God did not, with His own voice, tell the world that which would cause Him to set aside the determined and revealed destruction of all flesh. But He appointed Noah as the "preacher" of His requirements, and in this was also manifesting His merciful ways. Noah was a man like all others in the regard of being "but flesh." Noah proved the easy possibility of "pleasing God" in his obedient faith to greater demands than those imposed on all others. It was when Noah had commenced to build the Ark, and thus prove his own faith by his works, that he commenced preaching to others, by Divine instructions, how they were to prove their faith by works. In thus preaching what others should do to obtain the like standing as his own, he was instructed by God, as he had been in regard to his own works of faith. Just as God did not leave to Noah the deciding as to his own works of faith (the building of the Ark), so with the required course of faith with the world.

It is in 2nd Peter 2:5, and not in Genesis, that there is recorded the fact and theme of Noah's preaching: "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the Flood upon the world of the ungodly." (As explained in 1st Peter 3:20, the use of "eighth" in this verse, and with Noah, refers to the eight persons in his house. And the use of "Old world and world of the ungodly" to the same subjects marks the different standing at the commencement and ending of the 120 years' respite.) It is in the same regard of the "preaching" by Noah that the Divine attitude is defined in 1st Peter 3:20, as "also that of the world." "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water." In both these Scriptures there is the particular matter of the themes of Noah's preaching in view, but also there is involved those of the previous Divine preaching recorded in Genesis 6:3, 7.

Faith in God's preached message would gladly and of necessity be expressed by faith in and obedience to the themes of Noah's preaching. The deeply impressed listen-

ers to Peter's preaching at Pentecost earnestly solicited at its close as to the course required from them, as in Acts 2:37: "When they heard, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men, brethren, **what shall we do?**" This should have been the universal attitude as the result of **God's preaching**, recorded in Genesis 6:3, 7, and God made provision for meeting it in making Noah a preacher of Righteousness, **telling the world what to do**. Thus, the "disobedience" of the world, referred to in 1st Peter 3:20, included not asking what to do after hearing God speak, and the continued **doing** the things which the themes of Noah's preaching commanded **not to be done**. The distinction between unbelief and disobedience in the expression of both with that world was that of the attitude of God's preaching, and the attitude to the commands of Noah's preaching. **Unbelief** of the first, expressed itself in "**disobedience**" to the second.

These distinguished but united features of faith and obedience are the respective ones of 1st Peter 3:20; Hebrews 11:7. In the first, and as noted, the world is referred to as being condemned because of "**disobedience**" to Noah's preaching of righteousness; in the second, Noah's faith manifested that of the attitude to God's preaching, and the attitude to its "**unbelief**." Unbelief **must** express itself in disobedience, as faith **must** in obedience. But 2nd Peter 2:5, in revealing that Noah was a "**preacher of righteousness**," does not define the matters of this. And 1st Peter 3:20, in revealing the "**disobedience**" of that world, during the time of the "**Waiting of the long-suffering of God**," does not define the things comprising "**disobedience**." Disobedience consists in not obeying **commands**; unbelief consists in not believing a message heard. God's word in Genesis 6:3, 7, heard by the world, did not contain any **commands**, and so was only possible of faith or unbelief as the result, and not of obedience or disobedience. God's private speaking to Noah after His universal speaking, recorded in Genesis 6:13-21, was a **command** to Noah, telling him that which was required for his obedient faith. "**Thus did Noah**: according to all that God **commanded him**," is the summary in verse 22. God "**commanded**" all others through Noah's preaching.

In Romans 5:19, and of Adam, it is recorded: "**As by the disobedience of one the many were made sinners**." Apart

from the explanatory matter in Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:11, it would not be possible to know what command was disobeyed by Adam: "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee thou shouldst not eat?" Apart from the equally definite declarations of the matters of "disobedience" with world of Noah's days, in Christ's forecast and comparison, it is not possible to know wherein they disobeyed. Thus Christ presented that which is not recorded in Genesis, and which also explains the references in 1st Peter 3:20; 2nd Peter 2:5, to "disobedience" and Noah's preaching of righteousness. Two distinct forecasts and comparisons with the "days of Noah" were spoken by Christ at different parts of His ministry, and with the most powerful bearing on two distinct eras of His second Advent, in Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26, 27. In both of these there is the exact definition of the commands disobeyed by the world of Noah's days.

"For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark," is the matter of Matt. 24:38. The fact that these solemn words are not understood by the great majority of the living generation, that they are viewed as concealing rather than revealing the causes of the Flood, only manifests part of the prevailing "darkness" referred to in Isaiah 60:2 and of present times. (The darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people). To suppose that something not revealed by Christ were the causes of the Flood, and that the two matters revealed by Him were only referring to the ordinary and harmless things of life, is simply amazing in its unbelief. It is like that of urging that something else than Adam's partaking of the forbidden tree marked his "disobedience"; that something not revealed proved Noah's "obedience," and not his recorded building of the Ark. The two matters of "disobedience" revealed by Christ as the causes of the Flood complete the subject commencing with the recording of the one matter, which was responsible for Noah's escaping the Flood. Noah was obedient in one thing; the world was "disobedient" in two things. Noah was commanded to do; the world was commanded not to do.

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to "Eat and drink, not to marry nor to give in marriage," as proving their faith and obedience. Both commands only applied for the era of 120 years; neither had any application previously. Indeed, and in agreement with the matter of Romans 5:13, 14, previously considered, the distinct commands to Noah and to the world were the only ones for that lengthy first age, and after the command to Adam in the Garden of Eden, as in Genesis 2:16, 17. It was only by giving the two commands that faith and obedience **could** be made manifest, or their opposites. The era of 120 years did not originate the proscribed "eating and drinking," much less the marrying and giving in marriage. Both these had obtained in times reaching to the closing era, but apart from any prohibitive Divine command. Although Noah had not any part in "eating and drinking" during his life of 480 years and to the closing era, he had in marrying by Divine approval and blessing. Moreover it was the state of living mankind at the commencement of the 120 years that is recorded in Genesis 6:5, and **not** the one during the course of these, and which was responsible for the Flood: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

God's spoken message to the world was designed to alter this state within all, as His two commands through Noah were designed to provide opportunity of manifested obedience. Although Christ's mention in Matt. 24:38 of "eating and drinking" as one cause of the Flood, is not so manifest to modern readers as the other cause of "marrying and giving in marriage," the fact that He presents it as **culpable** should cause earnest seeking readers to understand. Christ was **not** referring to necessary partaking of food shared in by Noah and his wife. **These two were not "eating and drinking,"** for, as declared by Christ in Matt. 24:39, all those who **were**, were taken away by the Flood. The "eating and drinking" referred to by Christ **ought not** to have been done, as it marked known, deliberate "disobedience" to the Divine command through Noah. The world commanded through Noah **not** to "eat and drink" perfectly understood that which was meant, since that proscribed **had been going on for many centuries.**

That world was not in fellowship with God, but was in associations opposed to His "way of life," as defined in Genesis 6:12, and at the commencement of the 120 years. "For all flesh had corrupted **His way upon the earth.**" Only Noah was in fellowship with the "way of the Lord," and his wife. All others, whether religious or not, were "eating and drinking" in another way. The commencement of this other "way," corrupting God's way, was in the third generation from Adam, and marked in the matter of Genesis 4:26, and in the marginal reading. At the era of the birth of Enos, the son of Seth, there was the commencement of an organised apostacy against the "Way of the Lord." **False religion, and not the true, dated from this era. "Then began men to call themselves by the name of the Lord."**

The descendants of these same "men" to the tenth generation, and the era of the closing 120 years, are the ones of Genesis 6:2, self-named "sons of God," and in the regard of an immoral order of marriages, "That the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took them wives of all which **they chose.**" These "men" were an organisation of professed celibates, but captured women as the wives of their organisation, and not of individual husbands. This same organisation of the self-named "sons of God" were the ones continuing the "corrupted way" commenced by their fathers seven generations before, and referred to in Genesis 6:12 at the opening of the last era: "For all flesh had corrupted **His way upon the earth.**" Although we know from Christ's comparison with the present era, that many of that world were not in close association with the organisation of the "sons of God," they were "eating and drinking" with those who were, and not in God's way of life.

Certainly as to the significance of Christ's reference to that "eating and drinking" in the days of Noah, which was one cause of the Flood, is brought by connected references both of past times and of the present era. In 1st Corinthians 10:3, 4, the pure worship of God by Israel in the wilderness is thus referred to: "And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink." And in verse 7 there are these words of the idolatrous worship of the golden calf, as in Exod. 32:6: "And the people sat down to eat and drink." In two of

Christ's parables, reaching to the present era, there is the like "eating and drinking" warned against. Matt. 24:49 is one of these, connected with Christ's coming in verse 48: "But and if that servant shall evilly say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming: And shall begin to smite fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." The other is in Luke 12:45. Both are "due truth" only to the present era.

God commanded, through Noah, the ceasing of this "eating and drinking" in the corrupted way, as an essential to escaping the coming Flood, and which involved association with Noah and his wife in God's way of life. The continuance of the prohibited "eating and drinking" proved **unbelief** in God's preaching to the world, as it did "**disobedience**" to His command through Noah.

"For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, **marrying, and giving in marriage.**" The previously noted matter of the Divine hindering of all births, save the six "children of promise," was in agreement with the hindering of marriage for the era to the Flood. In the Divine estimate shared by all believing His word, the days "before the Flood" **were not marrying days**, but of getting ready for the mighty event ahead. God could and did hinder the births of helpless and irresponsible children, but He left it to each to decide **if** they would obey His command not to **marry**, nor be associated with the marrying of others. Faith and obedience would not permit any marrying nor association with it. If God had not commanded the ceasing of marriage for the era of 120 years, marrying and its associations would not have marked "**disobedience.**" But God **did command** its ceasing through Noah.

Christ's words in Matt. 24:38, and regarding the prohibited marrying, comprises two features, "**Marrying and giving in marriage,**" with the declaration that both kinds continued to the day of Noah's entry into the Ark. As clearly revealed in Genesis, marriage from the third generation to the tenth **was** of two kinds: that of the natural and moral order with individual men and women "**giving**" each to the other as husband and wife. And that of the unnatural and immoral order of an organisation "**taking** wives of all them which they chose." As already noted, the "**giving**"

of the interested parties to each other was marriage in those early days apart from any legal or religious ceremony performed by others. It is to this natural and moral order that Christ employs the words "giving in marriage" in Matt. 24:38, and "marrying" to the other order. Both marked "disobedience" when the God Who made man commanded both to stop.

In the second forecast and comparison by Christ in this regard in Luke 17:27 there are these marked divisions: "They married wives; they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all." The "they marrying wives" were the evil men of the great apostacy; the "they given in marriage" were individual men and women mutually giving to each other. Although the numbers embraced in this regard of marriages may not have been as great as those of "eating and drinking," the like sentiment against any interference with liberty was. All those continuing "eating and drinking," if not associated in any way with marriages, shared with those who were in resenting any interference with their liberty. It is easy to recognise the inevitable odium cast upon Noah for his preaching of the two commands restricting the liberties of the world, and the necessity for Divine protection from "violence" if not from insult and reproach.

Section Five.

Christ's words in Matt. 24:38 definitely mark the ending of both eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, on the day of Noah's entry into the Ark. And this was, as in Genesis 7:1, 4, 10, seven days before the Flood. The two Divine commands preached by Noah for the 120 years ending the night before Noah's entry were not violated for the seven days' interval to the Flood. But in this suspension there was not either faith nor obedience but **fear, anxiety, astonishment**. In Matt. 24:39, and succeeding the previous mention in verse 38 of the day of Noah's entry into the Ark, marking the terminus of "eating and drinking" and the two orders of marriages, there is this matter: "And knew not until the Flood came and took them all away." We have already noted the significance of "knew not." It is now to be noted that verse 39 in revealing the continued and culpable ignorance of the world to the com-

ing of the "Flood" manifests that the ceasing of the two prohibited matters, seven days before, was not through faith and was not obedient. The omission in Luke 17:27 of any mention of "knew not" with the world of Noah's days, and received in Matt. 24:34, was a necessity on account of the different comparison presented in the two references. The "Harvest" comparison in Luke 17:26, 27 forbids any reference to "culpable ignorance" with Noah's generation. The comparison in Matt. 24:37-39 requires its mention as the likeness with the world at the coming of Christ for His people. "For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the Ark."

Not anything of Noah's unwearied preaching and building of the Ark, or the "waiting of the long-suffering of God," made the least difference with the universal "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage"! All this was going on as usual on the last day of the 120 years, and when all the preparation of the Ark was completed, **and the next day was the day of entry**, eagerly looked forward to by the faithful two, Noah and his wife, as well as anticipated by the six minors. Noah's last address had been given when the night before **that promised day** brought its rest to him.

But there was universal suspension of both prohibited things next day, **the day**, to Noah and his wife, as clearly revealed by Christ in Matt. 24:38: "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, **until the day that Noah entered the Ark.**" No one could eat and drink that day; no one ever thought of marrying that day, even though every previous day of the 120 years had witnessed defiant, obstinate refusal to entertain the commands of God presented to them by the patient preacher. And that day was, with the world, the pattern of the succeeding week of days to the coming of the Flood. And that "week," also, was apart from faith and obedience, as it was universal with mankind in its compulsorily **hushed state**. For the day of the entry into the Ark, and the seven days succeeding to the mighty coming of the Flood, there was with that world that which will have several expressions with the living world, forecasted by Christ and recorded in Luke

21:26: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." The "things" then coming on the earth were awe-inspiring.

It was the **entry into the Ark** that brought the universal hush, the suspending of wilful "disobedience," the fear, the astonishment, as well it might. Whatever estimates of that "entry" the world had speculated about (if indeed they had taken it seriously that the Ark would ever be entered) were all swept into oblivion when the reality took place. And which "entry," great and marvellous though it was in its Divine associations, was, by comparison with another "**entry**" soon to be realised, small, less wonderful. Not only were there the four "pairs" of human beings, but vast numbers of other "**pairs**" to enter that day. And although the four human pairs were, conceivably, together in Noah's home that night before the day, there was not any sign of all the other "pairs" in the vicinity of the Ark, nor near Noah's house, even though some from long distances were drawing near.

The service given to Noah in regard to all these* other "pairs," previous to entering the Ark and its services, was a big one, but not beyond his ready ability. Together with providing suitable apartments in the Ark for each pair, Noah's final service for them was the gathering and storing of the kinds and quantities of food for their twelve months' sojourn in the Ark. Noah had not the humanly impossible task given him, of finding and selecting the immense numbers and varieties of "pairs," and marshalling them all together ready for entry into the Ark at the one appointed time. Only the **One** Who made them all; the **One** Who knew where they were; the **One** Who knew the best pairs to select and take, could assemble them for the general entry at His own time on the **day of entry**.

The like marvellous condensing of words expressing such abundance of wonderful truth, previously noted in Genesis 6:18, with Noah, his sons, his wife, his sons' wives, has application to verses 19, 20: "And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the Ark, to keep alive with thee; they shall be male and female." Such immensity is comprised in this forecast as to be beyond Noah's, or any other mortal's, understanding in its particulars. Any uncertainty as to how all these crea-

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tures of flesh were to be found and taken by Noah into the Ark 120 years later was set at rest by the unthinkable wonderfulness of the 20th verse: "Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, **two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.**" There was not to be any need for the impossible, of Noah **seeking** for, sorting out, the immense numbers and varieties of pairs. At the appointed time for entering the Ark, all these pairs would **come to Noah.**

The forecast in Genesis 6:19, 20, like that of verse 18, was in the Divine speaking to Noah on the first day of the 120 years. In Genesis 7:7-10, there is presented the order of the entering into the Ark. This was that of Noah and his house **first**, and all the other "pairs" in their own order. "There went in two and two **unto Noah in the Ark**, the male and female, as God **had** commanded Noah." This was that which God had spoken to Noah, as in Genesis 6:19, 20, exactly 120 years before. He "**commandeth**" and it is done, was true of this "coming to Noah of all the pairs of earthly creatures as their preserver and guardian. And Noah received them all into the Ark, and led them to their own prepared apartments. And **all this** was witnessed by the wondering, fearful, human world, transfixed with astonishment at the amazing sight, and powerless to do anything save fear and wonder.

But the only result with the world of this **seeing** the Divine Word fulfilled; seeing the justification of Noah's faith and obedience; seeing the trust of all irrational creatures in the God that they disobeyed and **did not** "trust," is the one of Christ's words in Matt. 24:39: "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, **until the day that Noah entered the Ark.**" There was not any more than this ceasing to disobey, from **fear and wonder**. If the Flood had not come seven days later all these would have resumed their "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." Faith and obedience are not sudden growths in "stony ground nor amongst thorns." Even in "good soil" time for their growth to full fruition is always required, as in Luke 8:15: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep, and bring forth fruit **with patience.**"

On the first day of the closing era God spake to the world of its exact length in the words of Genesis 6:3. The same day God spake to Noah of the day of his entry into the Ark, in the words of verse 18. The night before the entry marked the end of the 120 years, and the day of entry was the one of God's previous word to Noah. On inviting Noah and his house into the Ark, as in Genesis 7: 1, there was need for the further speaking to Noah recorded in verse 4, to explain the fact of an interval before the coming of the Flood, and also of the full extent of that coming: "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth **forty days and forty nights.**" This was the first intimation of the interval of seven days after entry, as it was of the extensive "coming of the Flood." Both these matters were "due truth" reserved for the day of entry, **seven days, forty days and nights**, beyond the 120 years expiring the night before the entry.

But the "seven days" were not days of preaching to the world, but of preparations within the Ark, of getting ready for the event to come, of putting everything in order for the mighty Flood. "And the Lord shut him in," are the words in Genesis 7:16, and at the completion of the entry into the Ark. Noah's work with the world was finished seven days before the Flood. And for those seven days the wondering world made no appeals either to God or to Noah for further teaching, much less for forgiveness, for mercy and grace.

If that world had manifested faith and obedience even on the last day of the 120 years, the day before the "entry" into the Ark, neither the Ark nor the Flood would have been necessary, both would have been dispensed with. The only way of escape for the world was that of dispensing with the Ark and with the Flood. And this "dispensing" would have delayed for the time the many alterations designed in the earth's position within the firmament and on its surface, and in the altered conditions of human life, to be realised by the Flood. That first age was the most lengthy of all the ages to the new creation, being over 22 centuries in duration. It was, manifestly, a great object lesson for all then coming times. It testified that long life in sinful flesh did not profit in the things of faith more

than life less than one-tenth its average length. Even the final era of respite was more than twice the length of the long lives in later and in modern times—120 years—to no profit with the world.

When God determined and announced the Flood 120 years ahead, He knew that there would not be the need for altering His plans, and that not one in that world would believe and obey His Word. And this "knowing" with everyone in the world was on the same basis as that of knowing the **certain** entry of Noah and his wife into the Ark, "**knowing what was in man.**" All in that world were in the one "state," as Noah and his wife were in another. God knew that any alteration in the one "state" of the world would be, if at all, in **all the world**, and not merely in some; all the world would believe and obey, or not any. God's preaching and Noah's preaching were imperatively required with the Divine "long-suffering" by the moral government of God. God could not bring the end of that first age and its visitation apart from the era and services appointed. There **must** be "respite," preaching, building of the Ark, and God's "long-suffering waiting while the Ark was prepared." **God must do right.**

Only those who have been instructed in the glorious truths of the Divine purpose can contemplate these matters and their bearings on later times and generations, as **God does.** Sharing God's estimate of things, entering into His counsels, is the only way of understanding, and removes all differences of ideas and beliefs from such enlightened ones. "In Thy light shall we see light" is the true declaration in Psalm 36:9, and obtains with each of the **we** referred to. Seeing "eye to eye" with God ensures the same with all walking in His light, the "**them**" of Psalm 25:14, and the "**we**" of Psalm 36:9: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant."

Again and again there is this "**showing**' His covenant, His unalterable, all-embracing, loving purpose, in His Word, to "**them that fear Him.**" And this makes all present life in the flesh to be seen, as providing individual opportunity of "**laying hold by faith**" of the gracious promise of celestial inheritance, of becoming "**children of God.**" God has not any "**respect to persons**" in this regard. His love

for the world destroyed by the Flood was as real and unchangeable as for Noah and his house; "God is **love**," and cannot change. The same unchangeable, unfathomable love obtained in the destruction of the world by the Flood, as in the saving of Noah and His House, for—as in Lament. 3:38—"Out of the mouth of the Most High precedeth **not** evil and good," only "**good**." A terrestrial inheritance in eternal life and in a spiritual nature is assured all the creatures of God not gathered into celestial glory. "**Assured**" by boundless grace and through "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." The world destroyed by the Flood was a very small section of the bigger world of "**all nations**" referred to in the glorious home-coming in Psalm 86:9: "All nations whom Thou **hast made** shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy Name." Enlightened faith sees this "**coming**" as God sees it.

CHAPTER II.

"Parallel Days to Christ's Shout."

Section One.

On commencing this chapter it is necessary to present explanations of the whole scope of the part of this work of which it is the first portion. In Chapter 1 we have noted and considered the different "Days" and "Comings" comprised in the "Days of Noah—1st, those of the 120 years from God's speaking to the world, as in Genesis 6: 3, 7, and to Noah as in verses 13-21. 2nd, the day that God invited Noah and his house into the Ark. The parallel days to these are the ones for consideration in this chapter, and which are also marked in their commencing and ending by Christ's speaking. Christ's speaking from Heaven in the hearing of appointed listeners on earth, at the ending of an era parallel with that of 120 years in Noah's days, is that of his "shout," as defined in 1st Thess. 4: 16. And this "shout," like God's speaking to Noah when inviting him into the Ark, is "a coming" of Christ—the Speaking Coming—as distinguished from the succeeding Personal Coming.

Both the "Speaking Coming" and the "Personal Coming" of Christ mark the respective terminus to a previous era with each. This era between Christ's "shout" and His Personal Coming is parallel with the one of the "seven days'" interval between Noah's coming into the Ark and the coming of the Flood. The succeeding matter of this work to that of this chapter is devoted to the consideration of this era of the "interval." The consideration of the "days" succeeding Christ's Personal Coming for His people, parallel with the "forty days and nights" of the coming of the Flood, is not presented in this work. Thus, the use of "coming" in this chapter and in the succeeding portion of the work is scripturally correct, when employed of Christ's "shout" as of His personal appearing for His people, even though the two are distinguished from each other.

Christ's comparisons and forecasts with the "days of Noah" and of His appearing again from Heaven are presented in Matt. 24: 37-39, Luke 17: 26, 27, and outline the exact parallels between the various "days" or eras of the times of the Flood, and of His own appearing. The one in Matt. 24:37-39 treats wholly upon those of "the days of Noah" ending at the coming of the Flood. In this inclusion of the era of 120 years, the day of entry into the Ark, and the interval of seven days to the coming of the Flood, there is the twice-declared likeness or parallel, "So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." It is to this "so" in Matt. 24: 37-39 that the matter of this work, commencing with the present chapter, is devoted, and not to the different one of Luke 17:26, 27, and which has application to the era parallel with the "forty days and nights" of the coming of the Flood. Thus the "days" referred to in Luke 17: 26, 27 "of the Son of Man" succeed the "days" referred to in Matt. 24:37-39, and do not receive any exposition in this work beyond that involved in incidental mention. It is to the "coming of the Son of Man," and not to the succeeding "days of the Son of Man," that Matt. 24:37-39 applies; as it is to "the days" and not to "the coming" of the Son of Man, that the comparison and forecast in Luke 17:26, 27 relate.

The otherwise unknown and tremendous matter of the times and visitation of the Flood, being an exact likeness with the times of His own appearing from Heaven, is the solemn matter of Christ's spoken words in Matt. 24:37-39. In these times of boasted enlightenment over past times, and when even the historical truth* of the Flood is not without its many opponents, the words of Christ in this regard do not warrant any "boasting" over the past, nor false security in the idea of "the world getting better." Apart from Christ's declaration, there is not any other intimation of the astounding matter of His forecast. But when this "forecast" is understood and believed, there is also understood a mass of corroboration in other Scriptures otherwise vague in meaning. And the many doubting, if not rejecting wholly, the records of Genesis, but professing belief in Christ's Word as accurate, have opportunity and necessity for proving their faith in Him in this regard of

"the days of Noah." In this "foreseenst," as in all other of Christ's Words, it is true, as declared by Himself and recorded in Matt. 24:35; "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Both these declarations are true; Heaven and earth **will pass away**, and Christ's Words **will not**. The ones are temporary, the other is eternal.

It is, indeed, marvellous that an accurate example from such remote times of human history **could**, as Christ declares that it does, obtain with the "days" to His own coming, in the "days of Noah." Out of all then past history Christ presents in Matt. 24:37-39 the one **object lesson** of the world at His appearing in "as the days of Noah." Not "as the days" of Adam, nor of Abraham, nor of David, and not even of His own day when He was on earth, but "**as the days of Noah.**" It is not surprising that there is only **one** comparison of the world at Christ's appearing from Heaven in all human history of the past, but "it is that there is that **one**. It is staggering to human estimates that some 5000 years of human history only results in bringing the world into the state "of the days of Noah." where, as in Genesis 6:5, "The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." And **this** state continued for the succeeding 120 years in spite of all the provision to alter it, with not one convert to righteousness. And **this** is the "**object lesson**" that Christ presents of the world at His appearing.

Those following their own desires, rather than Christ's words, in seeking to postpone His coming into some indefinite future, have little to hope for by the desired delay. These are the ones mentioned in 2nd Peter 3:3, 4 with other references and as living in times when Christ's sign of His approach is universally manifest. And in their "saying" they are but repeating the like sentiments as were spoken "in the days of Noah," and by a class of which they are the representatives in the parallel days. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own desires. And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the

creation." In "scoffing" at this "coming" two distinct things are said in regard to the absence of any change. "Since the fathers fell asleep, and from the beginning of the creation," are these two. By denying any change since the "fathers" of the human race died, there is the denial of the universal change brought by the Flood in Noah's days. **This** is the involved matter of verses 3, 4.

In verses 5, 6 there is the answer to the other matter of "All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," and which traces back to another "flood" many ages before that in Noah's days, and also marking universal change since "the beginning," which these "scoffers" ought also to know. The fact of the Flood in Noah's days being denied in the mention of "since the fathers fell asleep" "by the scoffers" is further proved by the matter of verses 5, 6, as it is in the teaching of "modern science." These verses, in referring to a previous flood to that of "the waters of Noah," powerfully disclose the ready anxiety to ignore this one also by the "scoffers." In this there is the making manifest of the responsibility to know of both these floods by the ones denying them both. "For this purposely escapes them, that the Heavens were of old and the earth subsisting out of water and through the water by the Word of God. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." In the involved "Flood" of Noah's days, in verse 4, and the declared previous one of the first creation in verses 5, 6, there are **two** universal changes which these "scoffers" have responsibility to know of, with all others of living mankind at that era. In the Divine estimate everyone living at the era marked **ought** to know of these two floods "since the beginnng of the Creation" and to be further prepared by the knowledge for the parallel days to Christ's coming.

And this reference to the first great "Flood" on the first earth, destroying all its inhabitants, serves to bring reminder of the "object lesson" known by the world of the days of Noah. If, as stressed in 2nd Peter 3, 5, 6, ignorance of that first Flood is culpable at the era to Christ's coming, then surely it was some 5000 years before, and in the "days of Noah," when the second universal Flood was announced as coming upon them. The fact of

Christ's comparisons and forecasts in Matt. 24:37-39, concentrating on the Flood in Noah's days as the "object lesson" for the world at His appearing, is readily manifest. This was on the existing earth, and concerned human beings, and ought to be believed in by every living person at the appearing of His Sign. And all such as believed His Sign and Word would learn from the "due truth" of the era to His coming of the "object lesson" of the previous Flood on the first earth to the world of "the days of Noah." As proved in the experience of Christ's believing people during the present era there is the continual fulfilment with them of the promised leading and guiding, as in John 16:13: "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."

Amongst the 60 odd parables of Christ on "The Kingdom of Heaven," the majority have as their terminus the coming of the Lord, as each has its own particular matter to unfold in the like regard. And in some of these, too, there is the bringing in or the world outside His little "Kingdom." But the one great "object lesson" from past history fills a place peculiarly its own, as it is a living picture which cannot be effaced from the mental sight, when once the authority of Christ's words concerning it is fully recognised. Every living person is seen in a new and different light by its aid, "**seen**" as Christ depicts and sees them. And the sense of security provided by believing Christ's "due truth," and walking daily in its light, is intensified by looking at the one great "object lesson," and watching Noah and his wife in their course during the days before the Flood. A new deeper sense of fellowship is realised by the recognition of the remarkable likeness of living faith **then and now**.

This matter of Christ's own exposition, in Matt. 24:37-39, ought to arouse every professed believer in the coming of the Lord to test their beliefs in that regard by its clear, unmistakeable living pictures. In 2nd Cor. 13:5, and to living believers as to those first addressed in it, there are these words of earnest appeal: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." The Father's Word in Genesis is confirmed by Christ's comparison in every detail as it is written there. And an

"examination" in this regard of one's faith is profitable. All written expositions of the Second Advent are thoroughly tested by the "object lesson" in Matt. 24: 37-39, and private theories and speculations exposed by it, and only that which agrees with its living pictures confirmed and approved. It is indeed a searchlight most powerful.

Even in the things which must and do differ between the "days of Noah" and those ending at Christ's coming there is remarkable likeness in kind, differing only in form. A marked evidence of this latter is that of the preface in Matt. 24:36 to the comparison and forecast in verses 37-39: "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, no, not the Angels of Heaven, but My Father only." The concealing from absolutely all save the Father of that day and hour is the matter of this preface. And this further explains a later speaking by Christ on the day of His Ascension, as in Acts 1:6, 7: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" was the question asked him, with this reply: "And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." In this matter of times, and in that of Matt. 24:36, "knowing" only obtains with the Father.

Only the "times and seasons" not put in His own power are to be known by Christ's people. The day and hour of Christ's coming, the exact time of restoring the Kingdom to Israel, are two matters not revealed, but "put in the Father's power" only. The concealing of the day and hour of Christ's coming is, evidently, a compulsory matter of the Divine purpose revealed and stressed by Christ, as the associated one of the question of Acts 1:6 is. However difficult to accept or recognise, it is true that Christ Himself does not know the day and hour of His "shout"—His Speaking Coming—until it arrives at the notification of the Father. In Matt. 24:36 there is the use of "no one" and then the words, "but My Father only." In Mark 13:36 these are the words: "Neither the Son but the Father." Some necessity obtains in this concealing even from the Son of the momentous "day and hour."

But it is manifest from our previous considerations that this concealment from all differs with the revealing to

all the world of Noah's days of the exact times to the entry into the Ark 120 years ahead. This difference made necessary the preface in Matt. 24:36 to the exposition in verses 37, 39. But this "difference" is shown by Christ in His words in verse 39 as more seeming than real, as in form but not in kind: "And knew not until the Flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." In this comparison the culpable ignorance of the world of Noah's days is presented as the likeness of the same with the world at Christ's coming. This intimates that (which we have traced in the previous chapter) the Divine revealing of exact times was not of **any profit** where faith was absent. The world of the days of Noah did not obtain any benefit from being Divinely told of the exact times at their commencement, hence the world affected by Christ's coming **does not** suffer any wrong by not being told of the "day nor hour" of that coming.

Moreover, with Noah and his wife it was not their sharing with all others in the Divine speaking of the times that cheered and sustained them every day of the long times of "respite." Rather, it was the Divine guarantee given only to them of Genesis 6:18 that made every day peaceful, and their appointed service a delight. "And thou **shalt** come into the Ark; thou and thy sons; and thy wife; and thy sons' wives with thee." If Noah and his wife had not known the exact length of the closing era from its commencing, this Divine guarantee would have been abundantly sufficient for their "knowing the times and seasons" revealed for their faith. It is quite erroneous to assume that knowing the times and seasons is only possible by knowing the "day and hour" of Christ's coming. Every reference to times and seasons and the "knowing" of these by Christ's people is apart from this one matter, and is always self-explanatory. Romans 13:11, 12 is one of these "self-explanatory" references.

"And that knowing the time, that **now** it is high time to awake out of sleep; for **now** is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." So with the matter of times and seasons referred to in 1 Thess. 5:1, 2: "But if

the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." Understanding of the times and seasons reaching to the day of the Lord's coming includes that of its unknown time, like the coming of an unannounced "thief." The building of the Ark was practical proof of knowing the times and seasons by Noah, as it was an evidence to all others which they could not avoid nor forget. "Awaking out of sleep, putting on the armour of light," is practical proof of knowing the times and seasons, and mere talk about "dates" and events is not.

But note the bearing of the preface in Matt. 24: 36 on the comparison and forecast in verses 37-39. Noah was in the same regard as all the world in hearing the Divine speaking of the times recorded in Genesis 6:3: "Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Here is the likeness at the era to Christ's coming. His living people of that era are in exactly the same condition of "not knowing the day and hour of that coming" as all the world around them, and apart from any wrong with either. The fact that Christ will not come "unawares" to His watching people, even though they, like all others, know not the day nor hour of that coming, condemns the unprepared world. Every living person has the like opportunity of being "ready" when Christ comes as a "thief" with all those who are ready, exactly the same as that all the world had the like opportunity of being prepared as Noah and his wife had.

As we shall consider later, the world living during the era to the coming of Christ for His people is, in the revealed Divine estimate, quite as privileged with infallible evidences as the world in the days of Noah. Indeed, it is the likeness between the two that made possible the one being an object lesson for the other, even though the "evidences" varied in form but not in kind with the different worlds of living mankind.

After the introductory matter in Matt. 24:36, there is the commencing in verse 37 of the forecast and comparison comprising verses 37-39: "But as the days of Noah; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." This "but" has

connection with the difference specified in verse 36, and as stressing that such "difference" does not alter the likeness. This 37th verse also draws attention to the remarkable fact then first being revealed, that of "the days of Noah" being an exact likeness of the era to His coming. Not any other period of human history bears a true likeness with the times of His coming, but the era to the Flood **does**, and this confers a great privilege on the world Christ is to come to as well as responsibility.

The world of Noah's days had the privilege provided them of an object lesson, or an exact example, as the world of Christ's coming has. In the Divine estimate this "exact example" of past history, drawn attention to and stressed by Christ in His speaking to the last days, provides equalisation of evidences with the two worlds--of Noah's days and of His own coming. That first world heard the voice of God speaking to them of the times then present with the associated matters of Noah's building of the Ark and preaching. The world of the Second Advent has the great "object lesson," together with the written Word of Christ drawing attention to it, as well as most wonderful signs bearing likeness with the material witness of the Ark. So there is tremendous significance in the opening words of Christ's exposition in Matt. 24:37: "But as the days of Noah; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

There was necessity for Christ to fully define His reference to "the days of Noah" in verse 37, also that of the last clause of the verse: "**So** shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Apart from such definition there would result differences of ideas as to His meaning even among earnest and anxious readers. Any such differences are dispensed with by Christ's clear explanation in verses 38, 39. That which Christ means in Matt. 24: 37 is thus explained by Him in verse 38: "For as in the days that were **before the Flood**." These were the ones which Christ designates in verse 37, "**the days of Noah**." The same days were referred to in the universal message recorded in Genesis 6:3, but not there named after Noah: "Yet **his days** shall be an hundred and twenty years." Universal man is referred to in this reference and the appointed limit of life in the words "**his days**" and **Noah** is .. .

this definition. Christ's mention of the same days in Matt. 24:37 excludes all others in designating them "the days of Noah." Both definitions are correct ones; those days were the full limit of human life for the world, as they were the one era named after Noah, and in this duplicating the naming of the Flood waters after Noah, as in Isaiah 54:9, "the waters of Noah, the days of Noah," are becoming terms.

The times before the era of Genesis 6:3 were not the days of Noah, even though they comprised 480 years of his life, but were the days of his grandfather, Methuselah, and of his father, Lamech. The closing era of 120 years should also have been the days of these two fathers, rather than "the days of Noah," if these fathers had been in the Divine fellowship and service. But they became "the days of Noah" because he was the only "just man" living in them, as the Flood waters became "the waters of Noah," because he was the only man escaping destruction by them through his victorious faith.

In John 8:56 there is the mention by Christ of "your father Abraham rejoiced to see **My day**; and he saw it and was glad." For the short time of His earthly life the times on earth were those of "Christ's day." His bodily presence was on earth. That "day of Christ" was the shortest, as it was the first of the times of the earth named after Him. That first short day of Christ ended with His bodily removal to Heaven, until the **day of His coming**. There cannot be any "days of Christ" on earth during His absence in Heaven, nor until His bodily presence is again on earth. So even the days preceding and ending on the "**day of His coming**" are not Christ's days, not "days of the Lord," but they are parallel with the "days of Noah."

Christ's days commence with the one of His coming for His people. This same "day" is designated "the day of Christ" in 2nd Thess. 2:2, and in 1st Thess. 5:2 it is thus referred to: **The day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night." The succeeding harvest marking the full end of the Gospel Age and to the Millennial Kingdom comprises "the **days of the Son of Man**" referred to in Luke 17:26. The glorious times of Christ's Kingdom on earth are those comprised in several

distinctive references, such as "the day of Christ" in Philip 2:16, and in 2nd Corinth. 1:14, as "the day of the Lord Jesus." These several days of Christ, commencing with the short one of His earthly life, are clearly distinguished in the Scriptures, as they are all associated with His bodily presence on the earth and in the affairs of the earth.

The revealed truth of these several days of Christ serves in turn to explain Christ's meaning in words spoken to His disciples and recorded in Luke 17:22: "And He said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see **one** of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it." How often this desire arose with those disciples after He had gone from them can be imagined best by others, such as are mentioned in 1st Peter 1:8: "Whom having **not seen** ye love; in Whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." What of those who **had seen** Him, and who longed for Him to continue with them?

Christ's explanation in Matt. 24:38 of the "days of Noah" referred to in verse 37 as "the days that were before the Flood," also distinguishes these many days and the particular one of their ending in the same verse. "Until **the day** that Noah entered into the Ark" is the distinguishing from "the **days** that were before the Flood," both of which definitions are the more manifest from our previous tracings. But the forecast of these is that twice declared in verses 37, 39: "**So** shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." It is the **forecast** which was responsible for the reference to the past, for all the features of comparison, and not any mere historical treatise. That **one** day of Noah's entry into the Ark at the end of the many days comprised in the 120 years' respite was **the exact likeness of the one day** of Christ's coming, as the previous era was a likeness with the era preceding His coming. Many days, one day, is the truth with both comings.

For the whole course of the era of "the days of Noah," the day of coming into the Ark, and the succeeding coming of the Flood, were daily coming nearer and nearer. Previous to the first of the days of Noah there were not any of these different comings into the Ark and of the Flood,

not any marked and revealed terminus of existing things on earth. But from that first day of the final 120 years these different "comings" all commenced. Here also is the forecast of "so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be," and which "coming" has exactly as many phases as in the "object lesson" of the days of Noah. Unlike the matter of the revealing of the coming of the Flood on the first day of the final era, the **promise** of Christ's coming dates from long before the commencement of the era reaching to it. But **like** the Divine Word announcing the opening of the final era to the Flood, Christ's **coming** dates from the parallel era of "the days of Noah." Christ's comparison and forecast in Matt. 24:37-39 exclude anything transpiring previous to the "days that were before the Flood."

In the dual uses of "so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be," in Matt. 24:37, 39, there are the series of days which we have traced in Chapter One of this work, the many days of the era of respite and of the building of the Ark—Noah's preaching, God's long-suffering; the one day of entry into the Ark, the seven days' interval, the forty days and nights of the full coming of the Flood—all **these** are likeness with the coming of Christ. To read the comparison in Matt. 24: 37-39 with the days of Noah with **seeing** eyes is to understand that in every feature the designed object is to more powerfully present the forecast of "so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Christ uses this one true example from past history as the most powerful and effective means of displaying all the diversified phases of His own return, and as a key to all His other teachings on the same supremely important matter. The era comprising the "days of Noah" from the Divine speaking on the first of these, to the Divine invitation of Noah and his house into the Ark, is the one illustrating that preceding and ending at Christ's coming, and for our next consideration.

Section Two.

Divine speaking, as recorded in Genesis 6:3, 7, announced and marked the commencing era to the speaking 120 years later, on the day of Noah's entry into the Ark. This marks a first likeness with the speaking at the com-

mencement of the era to Christ's Speaking Coming. The second likeness on the same opening day of the final era was the Divine speaking to Noah of the additional matters recorded in Genesis 6:13-21. Apart from these two speakings, not any of the things transpiring during "the days of Noah" could have taken place. The Divine Being must always take the initiative, and His creatures follow, either by faith or in such experiences as He appoints and approves. The two Divine messages so strongly marked and distinguished in Genesis, 6th chapter, are the likeness with the Divine messages at the parallel era, preceding and ending at the coming of Christ for His people.

As declared in Hebrews 1:2, the one Divine speaking to the "last days" was through His Son. The New Testament is this speaking in written form. This has neither needed nor received any additions from Heaven, since Christ dictated to John on the Isle Patmos its last portion. This written speaking of His Son, like that of the Father in Moses and the Prophets, manifests the order of "due truth" throughout. Some sections, obviously, are of a character which makes their matters "due truth" to every generation of the "last days," in spiritual teachings, appeals, admonitions, or, as in 2nd Timothy 3:16: "Profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." But such matters and forecasts as that of Luke 21: 20-22 are numerous in kind, and can only apply at the time marked in them, and to the persons addressed in the circumstances forecasted: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto."

Christ spake these words just before His death, but they were addressed to a critical time some forty years later, and not to any other time. So that the speaking was the same as if spoken at the time indicated in it, and was the one means of enlightenment to the persons addressed. Moreover, with the spoken message, and to provide certainty to those addressed of the time of its application, a sign was defined as the evidence to sight of the time being

present. The "sign" was in human affairs associated with Jerusalem; the spoken matter was from Divine associations—God speaking through His Son. This one illustration of "due truth," out of many others, will suffice for the disclosing of the order of "speaking" to the last days by His Son. And the order of "due truth" makes each message spoken to be the same in reality and authority as if spoken at the time to which it is addressed, and the only time to which it applies. Just as it is certain that God desires the faith and obedience of mankind, so is it that the methods of soliciting these are the best that He could devise. Written speaking of "due truth" is that which God has appointed for calling forth loving faith and obedience during the "last days."

The "due truth" of Christ's speaking the comparisons and forecasts in Matt. 24:37-39, Luke 17:26, 27, with "the days of Noah" and His own coming, can only apply at the commencement, and for the course of the era to that coming. They are only due at that time, and not at any preceding nor succeeding one. The "days of Noah" were the closing era of the first age; Christ's comparison with them and forecast are addressed only (as due truth) to an era ending with His coming. Thus, Christ's speaking to that "era" of His coming is exactly parallel with the Divine speaking in Genesis 6:3, 7, at the commencement of the days of Noah. God spake to the living world of that era, and Christ speaks to a bigger world of mankind all over the earth, through His written Word, in all the languages of living mankind. One difference in the two speakings, of God and of Christ, previously noted, is that of the exact length of the closing era being revealed in God's speaking, and absent in Christ's. But this is more than equalised by the "object lesson" in Christ's speaking of "the days of Noah."

Christ's forecasts and comparisons in the regard of His coming have been written in His Word for 19 centuries, but could not, even to the most earnest seeker, give the slightest indication of the time of their realisation. In this there is disclosed the need for another phase of "due truth" in the supplying of the "time" feature, and which is a likeness with God's speaking to Noah in the regard of the Ark.

A "sign" forms the matter of this other "due truth" spoken by Christ, and illustrated by the Ark, and in its proportions corresponding with the world addressed in it, as the Ark was to its world. The local area of the destruction of Jerusalem made only a local sign necessary. The universal area of the Second Advent requires a universal sign. So there is perfect agreement with the comparison and forecast illustrating the era to Christ's coming, and the sign marking the time of its commencement. The universal area is the same both with the spread of Christ's Word and the appearing of His sign.

There is intended and remarkable likeness between Christ's Words in Luke 21:20 and verse 31 in the use of "seeing" in both; but only that of verse 31 is a likeness with the "seeing" of the Ark by a living world. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies" is the first reference to the seeing of the particular "ye" addressed, with a second stressing of the time of "seeing" in the words, "Then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." In the 31st verse a totally different "seeing" by others addressed as "ye," at a time also stressed, is presented: "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." The "ye" of verse 20 were Christ's people in Jerusalem at the time just before its destruction. The "ye" mentioned three times in verse 31 are Christ's people all over the earth at the appearing of the sign of His coming in every land. The "seeing" of the respective "ye" of the different signs is alike at a time when that signified in each is "nigh." The "desolation of Jerusalem" was "nigh" with the one; "the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand" with the other.

In neither of these was there the suggestion of "totalling up the times of prophecy" to arrive at the time of each event, but the directing of the sight to unmistakable signs of "when, then and nigh" with each. Mistakes have been, and can be, made in "totalling up prophetic times," and Christ desired that all causes for "mistakes" would be removed, and a basis for certainty provided the faith of the respective "ye" addressed by Him. (The speaking of Christ in the sign of His coming, like God's speaking to Noah of the Ark, is to His believing people of that era;

the speaking of Christ in the comparisons and forecasts associated with the "days of Noah" is apart from any use of personal pronouns, and a likeness with God's speaking in Genesis 6:3, 7.)

The matters noted from Luke 21:31 have their commencement in verse 28, and the "things" referred to in both verses as comprising Christ's sign are some of those specified in verses 25, 26. Several of the "things" recorded in verses 25-27 are not due until the succeeding "days of the Son of Man." The signs in sun, moon and stars, the sea and the waves roaring, the shaking of the powers of Heaven are located in the "days," and not the era, of "the coming of the Son of Man." "Distress of nations with perplexity" is one of the "things" comprising Christ's sign with an associated and first display of the other "thing" recorded in verse 26: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." The first display of this "fear and looking" is at and during the "distress of nations." Other displays of these same "fear and looking" will obtain at later stages.

Luke 21:28 presents the first reference to the "sign" succeeding Christ's definition of two of the "things" comprised in it, and which we have just noted: "And when these things (previously defined) begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." In this there is a dual "beginning" indicated; that of the "things" specified, and the greater "beginning" to terminate in the "nigh redemption" of the ones addressed. In this verse the "drawing nigh" of the redemption of the "ye" addressed is dated from this "beginning." In verse 31, the Kingdom of God being "nigh at hand" is the matter dated from "seeing the things coming to pass," at the "beginning" by the same "ye." Thus the redemption of Christ's seeing people and the coming of the Kingdom of God are both marked as "nigh" from the time "when these things begin to come to pass." Neither of these was "nigh" previous to the time marked. And both of these are brought from Heaven by Christ at His coming. The "drawing nigh" of the "redemption" and of

the Kingdom of God is that also of Christ's descent from Heaven.

"Begin to come to pass," as in Luke 21:28, not only marks the commencement of the "things"—the distress of nations with perplexity—but the continuance through the era marked and to His coming. In verse 36 this is further made manifest in the mention of other "things" to succeed those of verse 28: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Only from the "things" of verse 31, and not from those of verse 28, is there the exhortation given by Christ which only the instructed "ye" will give heed to and profit by. The "things" referred to in Luke 21:28, 31, comprise the sign of Christ's coming, and so continue through the era to it, then merging into those of verse 36: "All these things that shall come to pass."

And just as the severe "things" coming to pass on earth after Christ's coming bear likeness with the Flood, so the "distress of nations with perplexity" comprising Christ's sign discloses a like condition on earth during "the days of Noah" to his entry into the Ark. The "distress" of those days would further impress the two Divine commands through Noah, as it must have greatly reduced the "violence" referred to in Genesis 6:11. Two other features of likeness are presented in Luke 21: 35, 36 in conjunction with Matt. 24:37-39. Christ's words in Luke 21:35 are parallel with God's Word to Noah in Genesis 6:13, and are addressed to the "ye" of Christ's approved people: "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me." This was at the opening of "the days of Noah." At the parallel "beginning" of the era of His coming, Christ's words to His living people concerning its result are those of Luke 21:35: "For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Outside of the "ye" addressed by Christ in this confidential matter, not any have understanding of the result of the "era" to His coming on living mankind. Christ's words to His living people at that era, in Luke 21:28, 36, have likeness with God's guarantees to Noah and his wife, as in Genesis 6:18: "And thou shalt come into the Ark; thou and thy sons,

and thy wife; and thy sons with thee." The likeness with these in Christ's guarantee in Luke 21:28 is unmistakable: "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, then raise yourselves, for your redemption draweth nigh."

Abiding daily in this promise by faith and obedience, is with these *ye* as it was with Noah and his wife, all that is necessary for obtaining the promised "redemption" **unknown to all others**. And it is certain that, with Noah and his wife, as with every one of the "*ye*" of Christ's people, there was daily the observing of the enjoined "watching, praying to be accounted worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass," as in Luke 21:36.

The obvious need for more definite information concerning Christ's sign than the definitions of its "things" in Luke 21: 25, 26, and the further mention of them in verse 28, was anticipated by Christ and provided for. In this "anticipating and providing" the most effective means were employed, and in a parable compressed into two verses, 29, 30. It only requires recognition of the necessary character of a universal sign as the infallible evidence to faith to appreciate the task imposed upon Christ, but which was not any "task" to Him. "Distress of nations" is not by any means uncommon in the past history of mankind, individually. And even universal "distress of nations," if rare or with an isolated experience, was **not** regarded by Christ as sufficiently clear and conclusive to fill out all designed in His sign. An additional feature was added as completing the infallible evidences.

Having previously spoken the nature of the "things" comprising His sign as "distress of nations," the basis of His parable was made manifest: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand." There is need only for Christ to draw attention to this matter in "trees" for everyone to see at once the material of the parable. If some other choice from nature had been made, either complicated in character or peculiar to some parts of the earth and not to others, the universal appeal would not have been so great. The "trees" of Christ's parable, to be a true comparison such as He purposed, **must** represent the previously mentioned "nations" amongst

the Kingdom of God is that also of Christ's descent from Heaven.

"**B**egin to come to pass," as in Luke 21:28, not only marks the commencement of the "things"—the distress of nations with perplexity—but the continuance through the era marked and to His coming. In verse 36 this is further made manifest in the mention of other "things" to succeed those of verse 28: "Watch **ye therefore**, and pray always that **ye** may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that **shall** come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Only from the "things" of verse 31, and not from those of verse 28, is there the exhortation given by Christ which only the instructed "**ye**" will give heed to and profit by. The "things" referred to in Luke 21:28, 31, comprise the sign of Christ's coming, and so continue through the era to it, then merging into those of verse 36: "All these things that **shall** come to pass."

And just as the severe "things" coming to pass on earth after Christ's coming bear likeness with the Flood, so the "distress of nations with perplexity" comprising Christ's sign discloses a like condition on earth during "the days of Noah" to his entry into the Ark. The "distress" of those days would further impress the two Divine commands through Noah, as it must have greatly reduced the "violence" referred to in Genesis 6:11. Two other features of likeness are presented in Luke 21: 35, 36 in conjunction with Matt. 24:37-39. Christ's words in Luke 21:35 are parallel with God's Word to Noah in Genesis 6:13, and are addressed to the "**ye**" of Christ's approved people: "And God said unto Noah, The **end** of all flesh is come before **Me**." This was at the opening of "the days of Noah." At the parallel "beginning" of the era of His coming, Christ's words to His living people concerning its result are those of Luke 21:35: "For as a snare shall it come on all **them** that dwell on the face of the whole earth." Outside of the "**ye**" addressed by Christ in this confidential matter, not any have understanding of the result of the "era" to His coming on living mankind. Christ's words to His living people at that era, in Luke 21:28, 36, have likeness with God's guarantees to Noah and his wife, as in Genesis 6:18: "And thou **shalt** come into the Ark; thou and thy sons;

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Abiding daily in this promise by faith and obedience, is with these ye as it was with Noah and his wife, all that is necessary for obtaining the promised "redemption" **unknown to all others**. And it is certain that, with Noah and his wife, as with every one of the "ye" of Christ's people, there was daily the observing of the enjoined "watching, praying to be accounted worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass," as in Luke 21:36.

The obvious need for more definite information concerning Christ's sign than the definitions of its "things" in Luke 21: 25, 26, and the further mention of them in verse 28, was anticipated by Christ and provided for. In this "anticipating and providing" the most effective means were employed, and in a parable compressed into two verses, 29, 30. It only requires recognition of the necessary character of a universal sign as the infallible evidence to faith to appreciate the task imposed upon Christ, but which was not any "task" to Him. "Distress of nations" is not by any means uncommon in the past history of mankind, **individually**. And even universal "distress of nations," if rare or with an isolated experience, was not regarded by Christ as sufficiently clear and conclusive to fill out all designed in His sign. An additional feature was added as completing the infallible evidences.

Having previously spoken the nature of the "things" comprising His sign as "distress of nations," the basis of His parable was made manifest: "Behold the fig tree and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand." There is need only for Christ to draw attention to this matter in "trees" for everyone to see at once the material of the parable. If some other choice from nature had been made, either complicated in character or peculiar to some parts of the earth and not to others, the universal appeal would not have been so great. The "trees" of Christ's parable, to be a true comparison such as He purposed, must represent the previously mentioned "nations" amongst

whom there is the "distress" specified by Christ. Moreover, in the reference to the one particular tree as "the fig tree," there is intimated that fruit trees are intended in the comparison with "all the trees." Fruit trees are the ones which indicate by their "shooting forth" in fruit that summer is now nigh at hand. This shooting forth of fruit as the natural growth of trees illustrates that the "distress of nations" referred to is the "natural growth," and not anything imposed by God. And just as "summer" is the season for fruit trees to bear, so the era of the "distress of nations" marks another "summer" with all these "trees."

Christ's comparison in Luke 21:29, 30, is not exceptional in the methods of the Inspired Word. Many references in the Scriptures compare both individuals and nations with different kinds of trees, and each as significant in its bearing as the one of Christ's parable. This fact further makes appropriate Christ's use of trees to nations as appealing to the ready understanding since Bible readers are the ones appealed to, and for others to become such.

In Luke 21:25, and the mention of "distress of nations," there is not any recording of the numbers of these. The absence of this in verse 25 is explained in verse 29, and which may seem peculiar at first reading or until understood fully: "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees." Since the fig tree is one of all the trees, its distinguishing from them in this verse is the matter to be rightly understood. Moreover, the order of the verse is that of directing attention to the fig tree first, and "all the trees" after: "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees." It is by first beholding the fig tree of Christ's comparison that it is possible to behold "all the trees" of the like comparison. The "shooting" forth of the fig tree makes manifest the different "shooting forth of "all the trees," in Christ's comparisons if not in nature. It is this difference between the fig tree and all the trees of "shooting forth" that made necessary the omission of the numbers of nations in Luke 21:25, and use of "distress of nations with perplexity." The parable illustrates that all nations save that signified by "the fig tree" are bringing forth the same fruit, that of "distress." But the "fig tree" of Christ's comparison is not bearing any

fruit, since it is not sufficiently mature to "shoot forth in fruit."

Like all the other trees in the parable of Luke 21:29, 30, the fig trees bears comparison to a nation, and in this reference, as in all others in the Scriptures, is isolated to one nation of all human history. If this was not so there would be just cause for perplexity and uncertainty as to which nation is intended in Christ's parable. "Beholding the fig tree" is only possible as there is knowledge of it. Christ's appeal recognises that everyone ought to know—or quickly learn—the nation intended in His comparison. And "learning" can profitably commence with another parable spoken by Christ, of the same "fig tree nation," recorded in Luke 13:6-9. The time of His first appearing on earth and in flesh is the one of this "parable of the fig tree," and its "cutting down" is the final matter recorded in the parable. The "shooting forth" of the same "fig tree" is the first matter of comparison in the parable of Luke 21:29, 30, and at an era when the Second and glorious Appearing is nigh at hand. Understanding of "the fig tree" in Luke 21:29, 30 is made certain by the same of the "planted fig tree" in Luke 13:6.

Christ regarded one mention of "distress of nations" as sufficient with the illustration of the "shooting forth of all the trees," in the succeeding parable, for enlightened faith to see and rest upon His Word. But He did not regard the one mention of "the fig tree" in the parable in Luke 21:29, 30 as sufficient. In this parable the fig tree, although the key to beholding all the trees in their particular "distress," is part of the two matters presented. In another parable, as further expounding the one of Luke 21:29, 30, the one theme is "Behold the fig tree," and is recorded in Matt. 24:32, Mark 13:28. It is by pondering this parable of the fig tree that there is understanding of its different and remarkable "shooting forth" to that of "all the trees." This parable is of such **key** importance as to find mention by Matthew and Mark, even though Luke 21:29, 30 is the one and only record of the parable of "the fig tree, and all the trees."

Here is the matter of Matt. 24:32, and where only one theme is presented: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree;

when its **branch** is yet tender, and putteth forth **leaves**, ye know that summer is nigh." And this is the application in verse 33: "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors." In this mention of only one out of all varieties of fruit trees as the matter of illustration, Christ could only select the "fig tree" as one of comparison with the nation intended. The habits of any other fruit tree could not illustrate the truths and facts intended. In referring to all the trees in the parable in Luke 21:29, 30 there is not any mention of "branches and leaves," but the general one of "shooting forth," or fruit-bearing. But with the "fig tree" and its own particular parable, in Matt. 24:32, 33, these are the matters mentioned: "When its **branch** is yet tender and putteth forth **leaves**." Although the fruit is formed before the "leaves," it is after the leaves are fully grown that the fruit also is "fully grown," and **not** at the stage marked in Christ's parable of the "tender branch just putting forth leaves."

But, and although fig trees, like all other fruit trees, grow many branches, Christ employs the singular in His comparison, "when its **branch** is yet tender," not "when its branches are tender." A tree with only one tender "branch" just commencing to put forth leaves is the remarkable matter of this parable, and which is responsible for this added parable to that in Luke's Gospel. And so powerful is this matter of the fig tree with one tender branch putting forth its first leaves that Christ adds the matter of **seeing these things**, apart from any other signs, as proving that "it is nigh, even at the doors." This "**it**" is His own coming and that of the Divine Kingdom.

The matter of Mark 13:29 has application to **seeing the two matters** of the fig tree, that of its one tender branch, and of that branch putting forth leaves. The like reference to **seeing** in Luke 21:31 has connection with "the fig tree, and all the trees shooting forth." The presence of the fig tree amongst all the trees at the time of their particular "shooting forth" is the matter of the one "**seeing**"; the one tender branch just commencing to grow leaves is the matter of the other "**seeing**." This duality obtains in the words, "When ye shall see all these things come to pass,

know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand, even at the doors."

As emphasised by Christ in both these parables, seeing fruit trees shooting forth with their fruits is a matter of sight of the eyes, and not only some action of the mind. The mind is instructed in this regard through the sight of the eyes. And Christ stresses exactly the same in the regard of these marks of His sign, only in the opposite order. It is necessary to be instructed in mind from Christ's Word as to the things to look for, as comprising His sign, before seeing these things in faith. Christ's words concerning the sign of the impending destruction of Jerusalem in Luke 21:20 must be believed by those to whom they were addressed before they would look for and see the sign that He forecasted. And seeing with the eyes must succeed believing with the mind before any obedient action was possible: "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."

It was by seeing with the eyes the erection of the Ark that the world of Noah's days received infallible proofs of the truth preached to them, first by God and later by Noah. Things "to come" were before their eyes as the erection of the Ark daily progressed. And the "things to come," as indicated in the things of Christ's sign, should be seen by every human being on the earth exactly the same as with that world of Noah's days. The erection of the Ark was one witness of things to come. Christ's universal sign comprises two parts, and with these two parts there is much connected Scripture forecasting other associations of this most eventful era to Christ's coming. But where there is complete absence of faith abundance of signs are all in vain, and, as declared in Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him."

As involved and expressed in Christ's words in Matt. 24:32, 33 the one sign of the remarkable "fig tree" with its one tender branch putting forth its "leaves" is abundant evidence for faith in His impending coming, quite apart from the added matter of "distress of nations." But universal "distress" ought to have compelled seeking for light and truth, and to the finding of it in all its abundance in the Divine Word. The revealing by Christ of the complete-

ness of evidence in the sign of "the fig tree" for faith in His own coming living at hand has recognitions which the more display its convincing character. And these invite the closest attention to Christ's earnest words, which are worthy of being quoted again as written in Mark 13:28, 29: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when its branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye knew that summer is near. So ye in like-manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, at the doors."

In these words Christ is further confirming an outstanding matter of the Father's Word of Prophecy, and not revealing anything new save in the form of realisation and connection with His cause of the Gospel Age. Prophecy abounds with forecasts of Israel's glory of the latter days, succeeding her blindness and scattering amongst the Gentiles for the times of Messiah's absence from the earth. And the same "prophecy" forecasts the first stages of Israel's revived nationality in her own land, as heralding the coming to them of the Lord Messiah. The incorporating of this same matter by Christ in His parables as one of the signs of His coming is for the guidance, preparation and delighted faith of all who are desirous of sharing His nature and glory, and not as any further message to blinded Israel. The "ye" of Christ's people are the ones to whom He gives this wonderful sign. The "ye" living at the era when that which the sign forecasts is before the eyes are addressed in it.

That which Christ intended in the "fig tree" with its one "tender branch putting forth leaves" is the same as exactly described in Ezek. 38:11, 12, 14, and apart from any comparisons: "Them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates. The people gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. In that day when My people of Israel dwelleth safely." And the first signs of the reviving nationality of Israel, after their experiencing the "scattering into all nations" for the Gospel Age, signified in Christ's comparison to the "fig tree," have connection with the later stage referred to in Isaiah 27:6: "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." This abun-

dant fruit bearing during the "summer" approaching when the "fig tree" puts forth leaves on its one tender branch marks another great difference with "all the trees" of the Gentile nations, as in Luke 21.

But "seeing" the fig tree with the one tender branch putting forth leaves requires the "seeing" also of some universal change, in order to definitely recognise the time intended by Christ. One definite day marked the commencement of the building of the Ark and "seeing" by the world. The fact of a small Jewish State in Palestine, "a tender branch putting forth leaves," has been before the eyes of living mankind for the past fifteen years. But when, during these now past years, was the definite time intended by Christ in the words of Matt. 24:33, Luke 21:31, Mark 13:29: "When ye shall see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." The stage of this "when" is the one responsible for adding to the parable of "the fig tree" in Matt. 24:32, 33, Mark 13:28, 29, that of the parable of "the fig tree" and all the trees," in Luke 21:29,30. Nothing could be more powerful in its indications of the certain coming of Christ than the first signs of a Jewish nation in the Land of Israel. Every living person ought to know this, as every such "person" does see the actuality of Christ's forecast.

"Exceptional" obtains with the sign of the fig tree in the changed position of Israel to that of the whole Gospel Age. "Exceptional" obtains also in the "distress of nations," marking the particular time when "seeing" Christ's sign is dated, and from which the era to His coming commences. A "distress of nations" unprecedented in nature is the one intended in Luke 21: 25, 29, 30, and as the determining feature of times. Although with this, as with the "day and hour" of Christ's coming, it is true that even the "ye" addressed know not its definite day of commencement, all these do know the "times and seasons" now present. And in this "knowing" there is likeness between these "ye" and Noah and his wife in the parallel eras, in kind even though not in form.

The writer of this book solicits the indulgence of his readers in regard to his quoting from his own published writings of over four years ago on the matter of the first

stage of Christ's sign being then realised. The ever-increasing "due truth" during the same years has further confirmed the faith then held and confessed. The following is quoted from page 137 of "Behold the Bridegroom Cometh," and is appropriate at this stage of our studies:

"And here is the summary of the whole matter of Christ's infallible sign. The distress of nations which arises universally, and apart from any known cause, succeeding the commencement of a Jewish state in Palestine, is the matter of His exhortation and parables. Since 1920 and the British Mandate over Palestine, the fig tree of Israel's nationality has been 'shooting forth.' During the ten years, or down to the early portion of 1930, generally prosperous conditions prevailed amongst civilised nations. But a marked change has come to all nations, in economic depression in varying intensity, with vast numbers of unemployed in all nations, and an anxious state of insecurity everywhere prevailing. Nothing could be more striking than this confirmation of Christ's words in reference to the prevailing 'depression': 'Distress' of nations, with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.' And these things in all nations and with a revived Israel now manifest are the signs in the parabolic trees parallel with the signs in natural trees of approaching summer. Just as in the latter (the shooting forth of all trees including fig trees) indicates that summer is nigh at hand, so the different shooting forth of the parabolic fig tree and of all the trees is the infallible evidence that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

This quoted matter forms part of an exposition delivered in October, 1930, and published in December of that year. It is now some four years and six months since the truth of Christ's sign was recognised in the "universal depression," and confessed as the faith of the writer to fellow-believers and by the printed page. At that stage it was urgently necessary both to be sure that the "depression" was universal, and to confess without delay when recognising the fact faith in the Word of Christ which revealed the wonderful truth. But the exact day in the accurate Divine calendar marking the one from which He

counts the new era is alone known to Him, as also the length of the "era" then commencing to Christ's shout. It is our earnest belief gathered from His Word, as it is our great joy, that others in every land on earth shared with us in "seeing" Christ's sign in the last portion of 1930. Also that these fellow-believers are sharing with us in the abundant "due truth" provided by Christ.

Section Three.

In presenting "distress of nations" as the associated universal feature of His sign to the one of different character with the "fig tree" nation, there is indicated by Christ that this particular "distress" will be the only one for the era marked. And with the "shooting forth" of the fig tree nation as previously outlined in the exact prophecy of Ezek. 38:8-12, there is further confirmation of a "peaceful" era on earth as its times. In verse 8 there are these words: "The land that is brought back from the sword brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them." In verse 11, and of the gathered ones in this "land," there are the words: "Them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates." And in verse 2 the escaping of the existing "depression" obtaining in all other lands, is a feature marked: "The people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land," with this further mark of identity in verse 13, and another mention of the security obtaining: "When My people of Israel dwelleth safely."

Only under such universal peace conditions was it possible for the first signs of a Jewish nation in its own land to manifest themselves. And the fact of a universal war of unprecedented character preceding, as well as being humanly responsible for the appearing of these signs, the more emphasised them. A remarkable feature in this regard is this: Before the "Great War" ended in 1918, before the surrender of Jerusalem by the Turks, and on May 2nd, 1917, there was the famous "Balfour Declaration" by the British Government, which was as follows: "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people,

and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object." This gesture of the British Empire had tremendous bearing on the later deliberations of the "Peace Conference" in the regard of Palestine, and their results. It was the determining factor in the ultimate giving by "The League of Nations" to Great Britain in 1920 of a Mandate over Palestine, and which still continues.

The "Great War" of 1914-1918 had its aftermath with all Gentile nations also. A period of recovery was imperative with these for the repairing of some of the terrible losses incurred. And a season of prosperity succeeding made "all nations" better able to meet the unprecedented but **natural** "depression" commencing some time in the vicinity of the opening of 1930. The Divine forecast, as well as requirements of the era to Christ's shout, are those of a **peaceful** period, to be succeeded by the greatest War in all human history, as a Divine infliction parallel in its results with the Flood. The "Great War" of 1914-1918 is not even mentioned in prophecy save by inclusion with vast numbers of others, in such foreasts by Christ as that of Luke 21:9, 10, comprehending the Gospel Age. And in verse 9 there is a powerful intimation of the **peaceful** state on earth at the era marking the "end"—that is, of the era to His coming: "But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be ye not terrified, for these things **must first** come to pass; but the **end is not by and by**" (in Matt. 24:6 the words are "but the end is not yet").

The appealing sign which Christ presents as marking the definite stage of His coming is in agreement with the matter of a peaceful condition prevailing on earth for the era then ending, as recorded in Revelation 16:14, 15: "For they are the spirits of demons, working wonders, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, **to gather them together to the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.** **Behold, I come as a thief.** Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." A peaceful world is manifestly the one of this universal "gathering," and which "gathering" is the infallible sign of Christ's approach, and so marks another evidence of an unchanged world during the era of peace. If all these "gathered ones" had given

heed to Christ's sign and Word they would be gathered to Him at His coming instead of to the "war of the day of God Almighty." But not until Christ's coming is consummated and His people removed from the earth is there the commencement of this most terrible of all wars.

And both these forecasts by Christ are made more enlightening in the regard of the present "peaceful" era, and the changed order on earth at His coming, by the forecast in 1st Thess. 5:1-7. In verse 1 there are these words to the particular "ye" addressed by Christ in His two parables of the "Fig Tree and All the Trees." "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write you." Although the Thessalonians were the believers receiving this Epistle and sharing in its "due truth" to their times, they were not the "Ye brethren" who would be alive at the era of this matter of "due truth." The "ye and yourselves" addressed are the same as are referred to in verses 15, 17 of the previous chapter (1st Thess. 4) as "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." These two matters of being "alive and remaining" are very manifest by understanding the era preceding and ending at Christ's coming, and the need for "remaining" faithful with each of the "we" is essential to meeting Him. And just as 1st Thess. 4:14-18 forecasts the order of meeting Christ, so verses 1-7 of chapter 5 treat upon the era ending at that meeting the Lord. In verse 2 there is this matter: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."

All these "ye" addressed are thus credited with "perfectly knowing" the marvellous matter of the day coming into the night like a thief, but as requiring further information on such matters as that of verse 3—to be considered later. The "coming" of the Lord is the matter of chapter 4:14-18; the coming of "The day of the Lord" into "the night" on earth, that of chapter 5:2. A peaceful "night" is the comparison in this and with the era to the coming of "The day of the Lord" into it. In verse 5 these same "ye" are thus addressed and distinguished from all others around them, "Ye are all children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness." And in agreement with "night" being the time for sleeping, and the peaceful order of the era referred to, verses 6, 7 have

these further definitions: "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober; For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night."

In this reference to "drunken," as well as to "sleep" during the era marked, there is connection with the reference in Revelation 17:2: "And all the inhabitants of the earth have been made **drunk** with the wine of her fornication." "The night" when all others on earth, save the "**ye**" addressed, are asleep and drunk is the comparison of this forecast. And that which is to come like a thief is "The day of the Lord into the night," and changing night into the Great Day of God, Almighty, with its war. Sleep requires peaceful conditions, and to be drunk, as well as asleep, further emphasises the absence of conscious recognition of that which is around and that which is impending. In declaring that the "**ye**" addressed are perfectly aware of the coming of the day of the Lord into the night of the earth, there is mention of others, as "**they, them,**" and their speaking in the same regard, in 1st Thess. 5:3. These are speaking to all the sleepers.

"For when **they** shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." These are the leaders and teachers of the sleepers and drunken, announcing at the impending coming of the day into the night, that not any such change is coming, but that there is to be the continuance of "**peace and safety,**" thus making the Word of God of none effect. The distinguishing of these "**they, them**" from all other sleepers by their "**saying,**" obtains also in the forecast of their destruction. Even while they are "**saying peace and safety,**" there is to come upon them "**sudden** destruction, and they shall not escape." This sudden destruction of all the misleading leaders and teachers, on the same day of Christ's coming for His people, is the matter also of Christ's parables to be considered later. Faith in Christ's Word can alone provide to each "**peace and safety.**"

Nothing could be more emphatic than these Scriptures in regard to the reasonable requirement from every living person at Christ's coming, to be a believer in it and to be fully prepared for it. Everything on earth during the era

from Christ's sign to His coming is designed to convince living mankind of His approach, and to invite faith and obedience in His Word to the times. The offer of exceptional redemption into His own nature, the more intensifies the sin of unbelief and disobedience, and justifies the exceptional judgments.

Thus Christ's forecasts of "Wars and commotions," in Luke 21:9, 10, and as all preceding the era to His coming, agree with the other Scriptures which set forth the peaceful "night" prevailing on earth during that "era." And this forecast is placed in a different section of His great prophecy, to that of the sign of His coming, and is compared with experiences like those marking its material. Moreover, the severe visitation to succeed His coming, and termed "War" in Revelation 16:14, is not so defined in His great prophecy, to further avoid any confounding it with all previous ones of the Gospel age.

Christ's sign in Luke 21:25: "Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity," bears comparison and contrast with another experience defined in verse 23, and with the people of Israel in the siege of Jerusalem, also referred to in verses 20-23: "For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people." And in only recording the two different experiences of "distress," in verses 23, 25, there is further evidence of the only one intended in Christ's sign. The greatest part of the Gospel age comprised that between the matters of verses 23, 25 and their respective "distress," and during which there have been many experiences of "distress" by different generations. In this matter of comparison and contrast between just two experiences of "distress" during the Gospel age there is evidence of the care taken to avoid all causes for uncertainty as to that which constitutes Christ's sign.

A striking feature in this regard is, that just as Luke 21:23, 25 are the two references to two experiences of this age to Christ's coming, so one of these, that of verse 23, is presented in Matt. 24:21, in contrast and comparison with all human experiences from creation to eternity. Hence in this the visitation upon the world after Christ's coming is also included. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." This "tribulation" in the different

comparison is the same as in Luke 21:23, "Great distress and wrath." So that in Matt. 24:21 the experience of the people of Israel in the siege of Jerusalem is presented as the most severe of mankind, and which further emphasises the use of "great and wrath" in the like regard in Luke 21:23.

In the distinguishing of the "distress and wrath" in this reference, as also in the use of "great" with the distress, there is both a contrast and comparison with the "distress of nations," as in verse 25, and one part of Christ's sign. The "great distress" of the besieged people of Israel in Jerusalem, was shortage of food, even to dreadful famine, and this, together with the fact that the siege of the city by the Roman armies, expressed God's "wrath" upon them, and not any mere natural causes. The absence of the use of "great" in the reference to "distress of nations" in Luke 21:25 marks the Divine estimate of the "depression" of the past four years and more, as not comparable in degree with that one of verse 23. As in Matt. 24:21 this latter is without parallel.

The different area of each "distress," as of subjects, is also marked in the respective verses. The one was that of Jerusalem alone and the people within that city. The other, as in verse 25, is: "Upon **the earth** distress of nations," thus outlining dual expressions of universal, more manifest by the added matter of "The Fig Tree" nation, and its peculiar "shooting forth." The absence of any mention of "wrath" with the "distress of nations," in verse 25, is a further difference, and which is more confirmed by the illustration in verse 30 of the "shooting forth" in fruit of all the trees. Not any Divine "wrath" is responsible for, nor expressed in, the "depression," but only the natural fruitage of human government. Not only so, but in the Divine estimate and as clearly involved, the "depression" was calculated to compel more sober thought of the tremendous testing of living mankind during the present era, in the regard of the amazing offer of "Exceptional redemption" to Christ's nature.

In such expression, as was impossible in any previous portion of the age, the wonderful matter of 1st Timothy 4:8 has been realised by everyone entering into faith in Christ: "For Godliness is profitable unto all things, having

the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Exceptional redemption includes that of the retaining of the life possessed, and of every need being supplied without fear of interference by the existing depression. The fact of Christ's people living through the present era, and of their learning through the exceptional experiences to "be content with such things as ye have," further marks the absence of "wrath" in the changed conditions of life.

And it is to Christ's people, and all men have like opportunity of becoming such, living through the present era and its experience, that the different things to succeed are referred to in Christ's words in Luke 21:36: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." These coming things are expressions of Divine wrath parallel with the Flood, but compulsorily of a different form, although the same in kind, in duplicating the "taking away" of all the world of Noah's days, save the eight of his house. As previously noted Revelation 16:14 defines these things to come as those of the "War of that great day of God, Almighty." In Daniel 12:1 there is this definition: "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." This more displays the present "depression" as comparatively mild in character, and as a natural and not supernatural event.

But the same matter of the "coming things" contribute to deeper understanding of Christ's comparisons, and contrasts with the "days of Noah," in Matt. 23:37-39. The Flood was not the same in form as these coming things, but it was in kind. It brought a war of God Almighty with that world. This compulsory varying in form, but not in kind, obtains in many other features of the present era. The whole earth was, and is, the scene of both Divine visitations. The destruction of all human life on the earth by the Flood is included in Christ's twice repeated declaration in Matt. 24:37, 39: "As the days of Noah; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." But Christ does not make any mention of irrational creatures destroyed, but only of the human race. The ones "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, which knew not until the Flood came and took them all away." These were the only human

inhabitants of the earth in those days, and were all **adults**.

So, the likeness declared by Christ with the world at His coming is of **adults**, and their destruction all over the earth. There were not any children or minors, save in Noah's house, either living or destroyed by the Flood. In this regard there was **not any object lesson** for the world during the era to Christ's coming. It is possible to entirely miss this, and to speculate that not any children should be born during the present era, on account of the hindering of births during the era to the Flood, to present a true likeness. The like method would insist that all human life on earth **must** be destroyed at Christ's coming to be a likeness with the days of Noah. Or that, because Noah built an Ark as proving his faith and obedience, every one of Christ's people of the present era must do the same, to present any likeness with him. **Christ defines the "object lesson," not mere mortals.**

Christ could not say, "As the days of Noah; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be," in regard to a generation of **children** to succeed the present adult generation at their destruction, **because there was not any such generation** in the days of Noah. The fact that there is such a generation at His coming, although varying with the world of Noah's days, is not any variation in His comparisons and contrasts with those days. And the fact that a living generation of mankind will be spared from the visitation parallel with the Flood, and when another, **adult**, generation is wholly destroyed by it, is true to Christ's comparisons and contrasts and not at variance with the object lesson. Wisdom is wholly derived from and not taken by mortals to the Divine Word. Another feature bearing on the present era presents itself.

Because the requirements of the "days of Noah" made imperative the suspending of all deaths, save the two fathers, does not involve the necessity for the same order with the human race now alive on the earth, **unless** the Divine purpose demands it. The fact that death is operating every day since Christ's sign appeared, proves that the Divine purpose does **not** require its suspension, **save** with those laying hold by faith of Christ's Word. Moreover, mortals do not know anything of Divine operations, beyond that which is revealed in His Word or manifest in His deal-

ings. There **may be** with death, as with births, during the present era, some alteration to the order of previous times without necessity for revealing this to His people. Births and deaths **are** taking place every day, and they **were not** taking place in the days of Noah.

Christ did not make any reference to either of these matters in His comparisons and contrasts. These two, births and deaths, and their suspension in the days of Noah were, with other matters, dispensational in character and utterly impossible in any other and later era. This is proved by facts. Only once in the history of this second earth has there been the universal Flood, with the guarantee that there would not be any repetition. In all matters of "history repeating itself," the determining factor defined in James 4:15 needs to be included: "For that ye ought to say, **if the Lord will.**" And it is glorious to know and contemplate, now, by faith, of the matters forecasted in Isaiah 65:17, and where lack of desire and not inability to do, is the feature stressed: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall **not be remembered**, nor come into mind."

But the principle of moral government which operated in saving the two fathers from the visitation of the Flood, and permitting their natural death, was not "dispensational" only, but a fundamental one, which can and will operate at the coming of Christ. There are many diverse operations of the same recorded in the Scriptures, and all revealing the Divine estimate of "Faithful," as of being apart from any violation of "God not having respect to persons." All that is required in the regard of the operation of this method of moral government is a like faith to that of Noah, of Abraham, and of others recorded in the Divine Word. There is, indeed, far-reaching application of this matter, as also illustrated with the deeply anxious father soliciting the healing by Christ of his sorely oppressed child, as in Mark 9:17-24: "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, **all things** are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

The father's faith that Christ **could** heal the child was required for that healing, and when expressed in broken accents, and fear, prevailed. The proved faith of Christ's

people during the era to His coming, is of a totally different texture to that of the anxious father, and will avail in many rewards with others of their connections, save those which demand the faith and obedience of every subject. "His ways are just and true."

But, to read Christ's words concerning the two marks of disobedience in the days of Noah, and which also proved the presence of unbelief, is also to recognise an almost universal duplicate in our world, an exact likeness. In Matt. 24:38, and succeeding the first use in verse 37 of the comparison with the days of Noah, and the words, "**So shall also** the coming of the Son of Man be," there are the solemn words: "For **as** in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark." This is the matter to which the "**So shall also** the coming of the Son of Man be," in verse 37, applies, as the second use of the same words in verse 39 has application to the other matter recorded in the verse: "And knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away, **so shall also** the coming of the Son of Man be." In the twice use of the same words there are the distinct applications to different matters and stages, as in the object lesson and its two comings—into the Ark and of the Flood.

When there is the recognition of the difference between Christ's reference to the then past event of the Flood and its days, and His forecast of the same things being done during the era to His coming, the note of sad amazement in His words is readily recognised. Christ manifested less surprise in telling for the first time of the two things which marked the "disobedience" in Noah's days, than in forecasting that the World at His coming would be doing the same two things. Not any person could have part in either if they believed the two signs of His impending coming; if they believed His new due truth, or if they believed His forecast of these things marking the basis of condemnation. Only those who really believe that "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," comprised the two forms of disobedience in Noah's days, will believe Christ's forecast: "**So shall also** the coming of the Son of Man be." In this forecast Christ only specifies the two matters of doing, and not even of speaking such as we have traced, and

of the same era, in 1st Thess: 5:1-7, and of the "sleeping and drunken" state of the world, in the same Scripture. In 2nd Timothy 3:2-7 there are other marks of the leaders and teachers designated "they and them" in 1st Thess. 5:1-7, and of the world of Christ's forecast and comparison in Matt. 24:37-39.

There are also other Scriptures which refer to that which the world "could not learn" during the same era, and which have later consideration, as also of Christ's people obtaining victory over the world, like Noah by the doing of faith. But all these other and connected matters are included in the two marking the doing of all the world save Christ's people, which is likeness with the world of Noah's days. In later tracings the first of these prohibited things, "eating and drinking," will be made manifest in its significance during the present era. The second one of "marrying and giving in marriage," needs no further explanation than its one mention in Christ's forecast in Matt. 24:38. It is not possible to read these words and not see their intended meaning, where the mind and heart are enlightened by Divine truth and grace. Nothing but ignorance would permit of any true believer having any associations with "marriages" when Christ's Word forbids it in the most solemn manner. If such "ignorance" has been responsible for taking part in these since Christ's sign appeared, with any true believer, there will be at once the seeking for forgiveness, and the full confession of Christ's right to prohibit all marriages during the present tremendous era.

What a vast difference it would have made during the present era, if all the world had obeyed Christ's requirement in regard to marriage, in the matter of births, if not the deathrate. And such obedience by faith in Christ's Word would also have dispensed with the associated and prohibited "eating and drinking." As declared by Christ, and recorded in John 14:21-24, the proof of love to Him is in "keeping His words," as the proof of not loving Him is: "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words." It is only for the short era to His coming and from the appearing of His sign that Christ's words in the forecast of Matt. 24:37-39, with other "due truth," appeal

for loving obedience. Others of "His words" have obtained throughout the Gospel age.

But a feature noted in chapter 1 of this work, and of "the days of Noah," obtains also during the present era in the difference between the two marks of "disobedience." Only during the era to His coming is there any imposed requirement for **not marrying**, and not having part in its performance. For all previous portions of the age there was the like necessity with the people of Christ, not to "**eat and drink**" with others outside Christ's "household." The observing of this by all the "overcomers" of the Gospel age who are to reign with Christ is the matter of Revelation 20:4, and expressed in another definition: "And I saw thrones and they sat upon them . . . which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." All outside Christ's "household" are comprised in the two designations of "the beast and his image," and not "Worshipping them" is the same as **not "eating and drinking"** with them, or not having fellowship together.

Section Four.

It is manifest from the facts of recent history that the first sign of revived Israel in Palestine preceded by some ten years the universal "depression" **the key sign** to Christ's coming. And it is in Luke 21:28-31, and the exposition of the "fig tree **and** all the trees," and not in Matt. 24:32, 33, Mark 13:28, 29, and the parable of "The Fig Tree," that there is the promise of "exceptional redemption." This promise dated from the time of the appearing of the combined sign, and not from the previous one of the first indication of the restored Israel. Ten years' preliminary indications prepared for the definite era to Christ's coming, commencing with "upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity." The provision of "exceptional redemption" obtains during this same era.

Christ's two parables presenting the two parts of His sign, in Matt. 24:32, 33, Luke 21:29, 30, are of necessity addressed to those on earth at the appearing of His sign **seeing it**, as well as to others later "seeing it." To all others not seeing the things transpiring at the time as mark-

ing Christ's sign, there is not any benefit or profit in reading Christ's parables. The parable of "The Fig Tree" in Matt. 24:32, 33, although so vitally connected with the people of Israel in Palestine, as well as the greater numbers of Israel still in Gentile lands, makes no appeal to either of these sections. The parable of "The Fig Tree and all the Trees," in Luke 21:29, 30, is as vitally connected with all the nations of the earth, where the "shooting forth" referred to in it obtains. But only in the unavoidable recognition of that signified in "shooting forth"; only in experiencing the "depression," and not in "seeing it," as the sign of His coming, is there any result amongst the vast majority of "the nations" of Christ's parable. So sound asleep was the world at the era of Christ's two parables, as to present a first to a later second universal display of "the coming as a thief." But it is of the "second" and not the first of His signs that the coming like a thief is "of the day into the night" with all the sleeping world. And another "day" to that brought into the "night" is brought to all the wakeful and watching ones of Christ's people by the coming of the Lord. To all these there is the realisation of 2nd Peter 1:19: "Until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts."

Amongst the several exceptions of the present era with the "days of Noah" noted and to be noted, there is that of living Israel being outside of the area of responsibility to Christ's sign and "due truth," although so markedly inside the matters of that sign. Israel in Palestine comprise the whole matter of the one parable. And Israel still amongst "all nations" shares with these in the experience of their particular "shooting forth." But, just as all Gentiles were excluded from the long and severe visitations upon Israel, commencing with the dreadful siege and destruction of Jerusalem, so Israel is excluded from the present responsibility of living Gentiles and coming judgment on unbelief and disobedience. In the same section of Christ's great prophecy previously considered in the contrasted "distress" of Luke 21:23, 25, there is in verse 24 this reference to age-lasting experience with Israel: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

In this forecast which is now near realisation the "all nations" are presented as the captors and Israel as "captives" until the era marked. Christ's use of the term "captive" to Israel's position for the Gospel age is the same as of His Father's Word in the like regard. The end of this, marked in Christ's forecast by the ceasing of the "treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles," brings that forecasted in Psalm 85:1 and many other prophecies: "Lord, Thou hast been favourable unto Thy land; Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob." Not until both these are realised—Luke 21:24, Psalm 85:1—is Israel fully delivered from "captivity" amongst the Gentiles, and both of these await the personal coming of Christ for their realisation. In the like regard of full deliverance, but in another connection of the state within the people of Israel, there is the matter of Romans 11:26, 27: "And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is My covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins."

Christ first comes "out of Sion" for His own people and takes them from the Earth. Succeeding this taking "From the earth and from among men" to their Heavenly Country, there is to be the gathering of captive Israel from among the Gentiles to their own land, by the coming of "the Deliverer" to them. And this coming of the Deliverer to "captive Israel" marks another bringing of another day into the night to the two previously considered, and particular to Israel as distinct from the "day of war" to the Gentiles, as in Isaiah 60:1-3: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee . . . And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

Thus the first signs of change to Israel are also the first of the approach of Christ to them and its fulfilment of the promises concerning Israel. Not any of Israel nor the great bulk of the Gentiles saw the sign at its appearing. But if all had been also asleep like these, Christ could not have said, as in Luke 21:28, 31: "When ye see these things come to pass." Some must be awake and watching to see this beginning. There was like necessity for some to first see Christ's sign by faith as for Noah's standing and service. If Noah had shared the state of the world when hearing

with them the universal message of Genesis 6:3, 7, he could not have received the added instructions in verses 13-21 concerning the Ark and his later certain entrance into it at its completion. But with Noah and his wife, as with all the then living world, "due truth" of that closing era was the basis of acceptable faith and obedience.

But with Noah, as with his wife, the previous course was responsible for their isolated positions, as their proved faith was for the particular services of building the Ark and preaching to the world by Noah. The associating of Noah's wife, with all his obedient and active faith and service, has powerful bearing on and likeness with the first "ye" addressed by Christ in His sign, and as marking a plurality in two regards. The first of these is that of "preachers" like Noah was and all over the earth; the second is that of associated believers' likeness with Noah's wife standing with the "preachers," and sharing the same faith. These two regards obtain with the first "ye" seeing and believing Christ's sign, and serving together in ^{the} "Work of the Lord."

Believing in and serving the "due truths" of the times previous to the new era commencing with Christ's sign, was the cause of the privileged "seeing" of the sign at its appearing, and being first addressed by Christ in the words of Luke 21:28, 31: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then raise yourselves, for your redemption draweth nigh. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." These words apply at the commencement of the era to His coming and not at the terminus of His shout. It is when His sign appears in its two wonderful features that these believing "ye" seeing that sign are thus addressed by Christ in His written speaking. And the same speaking reaches all others later coming in.

"Preaching" was a new order in "the days of Noah" with only one previous display in the ministry of Enoch for the latter part of his life. But "preaching" as the Divine means of enlightenment in His Gospel has been the order of the Gospel age commencing with the wonderful ministry of Jesus, and continued in the first century in the preaching ministry of His Apostles. In Romans 10:14, 15 the order of then coming times, as well as of present ones, finds

expression: "And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" **Preaching** is God's means of enlightenment, and the nature of the messsage preached proves whether the preacher is "sent" or not.

In Isaiah 66:2, 5 there are these words, and which have application in every dispensation and its Divine Service, as well as individual course of life: "To this man will I look, even to him that is meek and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My Word." Only such as that "man" can be used as Christ's messenger carrying His Gospel. The most effective means of ensuring this are those of only disclosing the hidden treasures of that "Gospel" to the "meek that tremble at His Word." The facts of the present era since Christ's sign appeared evidence that individuals have received and given to others by the means of preaching the "due truths" of Christ's Word. Universal opportunity was afforded professed servants of Christ, of proving themselves the first "ye" addressed by Christ in His parables and forecasts, by "seeing" and expounding Christ's sign to others and its associated word. Those who did and are doing this, occupy a parallel standing to that of Noah and his wife during the parallel era. **Only Noah** could preach the Divine message and build the Ark; not any others could be competitors with him, even if they would desire it.

But all that world had the like opportunity, as Noah and his wife of obedient faith and its promised deliverance, of pleasing God and being acceptable in His sight as "Heirs of the righteousness which is of faith." How very powerful is the likeness in this regard with the "exceptional redemption" promised from the appearing of Christ's sign! The only ones to whom this can be made at that "appearing" are those in a standing of obedient faith. But the succeeding era is for the purpose of providing the fullest opportunity for every living person coming into the standing of, and being addressed as, the "ye," to share the promised redemption. Any not included in these "ye" at the appearing of Christ's sign can, if they will, be included later, growing up like Noah's house during the era to His coming. The limiting of the delivered ones to the eight persons of

that house was not of Divine desire nor appointment, but made compulsory by the state of the world. The faith and standing of the house of Noah was fully available to all that world as that of the "house of Christ" is to all comprised in the living world. Noah's house could have comprised all that world and to the delight of the gracious God. Both the Father and the Son would delightedly welcome all the living generation into their nature and glory, if there was the responsive faith and obedience required to fit for this unspeakably glorious inheritance.

In addressing the first "ye" in Luke 21:28-31 in the promised exceptional redemption, Christ could not in the same matter make any mention of the previous course in His service of these, but only of their approved standing at that time. And this matter serves to identify the exact stage in the message to the "Angel and Church in Philadelphia" of the appearing of Christ's sign. This message is the sixth of those addressed to the Churches and recorded in Revelation 3:7-11. As abundantly manifest from the materials of this message, its first and local application to a then living people of Christ in the city of Philadelphia was its lesser to a far greater then to come. This "greater" is that of "the time of the end" commencing with the 19th century. It is in this message, only, of the seven messages, that Christ's coming for His people is said to be impending, hence the parallel era with "the days of Noah" is embraced in the message to Christ's coming. "Behold, I come quickly," is the thrilling announcement in Revelation 3:11.

In verse 8 there are these words, and which have dual application, first to the previous course of the ones addressed, and second to the then present and coming one. And in these two there is marked the commencement of the era to Christ's coming: "I know thy works; behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name." In agreement with the fact of the "ye" addressed by Christ in Luke 21:28-31 being particular faithful individuals, the words of Revelation 3:8, with other parts of the message, are addressed to the "Angel of the Church," the messenger or ministering section. The instructed faith of "The Angel" becomes, through preaching that of "the Church." In the parables of Matt. 24:45-51,

Luke 12:42-48, the like "messenger" section is presented as a "Steward ministering meat in due season to the household of faith."

In Revelation 3:8 there is close connection between the "setting of the new open door" and the known previous standing of the "messenger." The announcing of the new "open door," with the declaration that "no man can shut it," has associated mention of knowledge and approval of the previous course of the "angel" addressed—which "angel" is represented by individuals all over the earth. "I know thy works." These must have been previous "works" to be thus known. "For thou hast a little strength" further connects with the then past as with a present result. "A little strength" is commendatory, as proved by connected Scriptures setting forth the prevailing condition of the religious world, before and at the appearing of Christ's sign. In 2nd Timothy, 3rd chapter, there is one of these latter. "A little strength" is the evidence of a living faith, in times when "faith" is almost absent from the earth, as in Christ's words in Luke 18:8: "When He, the Son of Man, cometh will He find faith on the earth?" He "finds" and acknowledges it in this "messenger" community at the commencement of the era to His coming.

This "little strength," together with the two other matters of commendation in the same verse, and relating to previous times and a present standing, are the more powerful in being only spoken to this "messenger." Only of this "angel," and not of any others at the era marked, is it true that "Thou hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." All others in a like position of "teachers and leaders" during the same times, had not "kept His Word," and they had "denied His Name"—the opposite in each with the approved "angel."

The three features of commendation of "the angel," in Revelation 3:8, and at the "setting of the open door," provide necessary information as to why the "ye," addressed in Luke 21:28, receive first the promise of exceptional redemption, and more fully identify these. "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." How very powerful is the likeness with these first "ye" and Noah and his wife at the parallel eras indicated! Genesis 6:8, 9,

and Revelation 3:8, have unmistakable likeness. "But Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations," is the matter of the one. "I know thy works . . . for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name," is the likeness in the second.

And the promised future entrance into the Ark of Noah and his wife in Genesis 6:18, and when the six others to also enter were unborn, has its own likeness with the promise to the "ye" in Luke 21:28 and "the angel" in Rev. 3:8. The "ye" and the "angel" are alike plural, and the likeness of Noah and his wife. And the "six unborn ones," male and female, to later enter through the door of particular redemption were likeness with "the Church in Philadelphia," to whom the "open door" is announced, and entered by believing the preached message.

Although "your redemption," as in Luke 21:28, and "I have set before thee an open door" both refer to the one matter at the appearing of Christ's sign, the definition of "open door" embraces matters of preparation, as with Noah's building of the Ark. There is the process of "getting ready" and its means, bound up in the setting of the "open door." And also, as with Noah, so with the "angel," preaching the truths of the "open door" is an important feature of "getting ready," as believing them with others is to them. Entrance into the new due truths by the "angel," as with the "Church," ensures to both alike part in the new redemption at the terminus of the era to Christ's coming. "I have set before thee an open door," thus comprehends the whole era, and not only its commencement, as with the likeness in Noah's experience.

Christ's words, in Matt. 7:13, present the comparison of "the strait gate" as the entrance into "the narrow way which leadeth unto life." This has been the order of the Divine service for the Gospel age, to the setting of the "open door" at the era commencing with Christ's sign. As disclosed in connected Scriptures, this "open door" has not dispensed with the "strait gate and its narrow way," but is a particular addition. Everyone entering by faith through the "open door" to exceptional redemption must first enter "the strait gate." And the course for the era from Christ's sign to His shout with everyone entering the gate and door is that of "the narrow way."

Moreover, the setting of an open door is only exceptional in the **time** and not in fact, as forecasted in Revelation 3:8. The same "open door" was marked for opening to all Christ's people of the Gospel age at the personal coming of Christ, and as admitting all these into His nature and glory. That "door" is the outlet from the "narrow way" into eternal life with Christ, as the strait gate is the inlet. Thus the setting of the "open door" at the era of Christ's sign, instead of at His personal coming, was **exceptional**, as it marked the offer of "exceptional redemption." But there is a marked difference between the conditions of the "narrow way," with the "strait gate" as its only entrance, and those of the same "way" when the "open door" is provided as a further entrance with that of the "strait gate." The very word "gate" involves that of out in the open as the succeeding "narrow way" does. Erections or covered enclosures have as their entrances **doors** and not gates. And "out in the open," while walking the narrow way, leaves each walker exposed to conditions around, including that of falling asleep in death.

So the setting of the "open door" at the era of Christ's sign, for the entering into the promise of exceptional redemption of all those believing Christ's Word, marks an enclosed area or erection instead as formerly, "out in the open," as the course of the "narrow way." This door admits into a state of safety, security, from all outside conditions, including that of "falling asleep in death." The adding of the "open door to the strait gate" makes this remarkable difference with the nature of the succeeding "narrow way." The same door referred to in Revelation 3:8 is that of Matt. 25:10, Luke 13:25, but as **open** in the first and as **shut** in the other two references. And there are two stages of "shutting the door" corresponding with the two comings of Christ, which will be considered later, and likeness with the two comings in the days of Noah, into the Ark and of the Flood.

But there is a highly important connection between the matter of the "open door" in Revelation 3:8 and Christ's references to Himself in the previous verse, 7, and which gives added force to the words, "**Behold**, I have set before **thee** an open door, and no **man** can shut it." The authority of the Speaker to **set** this open door is presented

in verse 7: "These things saith **He** that is holy, **He** that is true, **He** that hath the key of David, **He** that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." Not anyone else save this "**He**" could say, "**Behold**, I have set before thee an open door." The right to redemption to eternal life and glory is, as in many Scriptures, "The gift of God **through** Jesus Christ." And the particular "redemption" provided by the "open door," to the ones addressed in this message, is only offered by Him and at the era marked. In this there is a second expression to that of the first of His earthly life and ministry, as in Hebrews 2:3: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord."

Only "**He**" could first speak in that regard of the "great salvation," and only **He** could speak at the era marking the time to His coming, of the particular "redemption" then offered in the words, "**Behold**, I have set before thee an open door." And only of the same "**He**" and the Father is the respective uses of "holy" employed in the highest significance. Christ is "**The Holy one of God**," as God Himself is "**The Holy Father**," as addressed by Christ in John 17:11. And just as God's Word is truth, as in John 17:17, so Christ's testimony of the Father and His Word made Christ to be the one "**Faithful Witness**," as in Revelation 3:14; Christ was God's witness to mankind, "God's "**one Apostle**," as defined in Hebrews 3:1, as the twelve men selected by Christ were made Christ's Apostles, His true witnesses. "**He** that is true" applies to **God's** witness, God's Apostle.

The third definition of Christ in Revelation 3:7 is this: "**He** that hath the key of David." It was because He was the proved "**Holy One, The True Witness**," that this "**key of David**" was given to Him, and which is explained in such references as Philip 2:9, 10: "Wherfore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a **name** which is above every **other name**. That in the **name of Jesus** every knee should bow. . . . And that every tongue should confess that Jesus is **Lord**, to the glory of God the Father." In Revelation 3:7 the original text has the addition of "**the**" to David, "**He** that hath the key of **the David**." In this there is not any suggestion of King David, the Psalmist, the son

of Jesse. Not any "key" was given to nor used by King David in "opening and shutting" entrances to redemption and eternal life. King David, with all other mortals, can only enter through the doors opened by this "key of the David" into eternal life, by the "He that is Holy, He that is true." The name "David" has the significance of "beloved," so that "the David" signifies "the beloved," of frequent reference in the New Testament.

"My Beloved Son" is used in such Scriptures as Matt. 3:17, Matt. 17:5, and as spoken from Heaven. "Accepted in the beloved" is the glorious standing referred to in Ephes. 1:6. This is the "name above every other name," Jesus "The Beloved." God loves all His creatures, with a particular expression of love for the children of faith. But Jesus has a name above every other name, "The Beloved." It is **this** which makes wonderful beyond words the standing of "accepted in The Beloved," provided by Christ for His people. This is "the name" all His people are to share; all these are, as in Acts 15:14: "A people for His name, The Beloved." At the Last Supper Christ drew attention to this wonderful matter for the first time, as in John 17:23: "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Here is the marvellous truth of "Accepted in The Beloved."

"The key of the David" is that of "all power." This "key" was given Him by the Father on account of His perfect obedience, "unto death, even the death of the Cross." At the Last Supper, and as recorded in John 17:2, Christ thus addressed the Father concerning Himself: "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." And amongst the several things spoken to the Apostles by Christ, after His resurrection, there is that of Matt. 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth." This "power is the key of the David" referred to in Revelation 3:7, and has reference to the things of "redemption and eternal life" provided through Christ, and to be "opened by Him at the times and in the manner appointed."

It is becoming that "all power" should be defined as the **one** "key" in this verse. But the several "openings" to the different things and subjects to enter them explain

the use of "keys" in other connections, as also that all these other "keys" are embraced in "the key of the David." Before Christ's death and in the regard of the opening of the "Kingdom of Heaven" after His departure to Heaven, there are these words in Matt. 18:19, and addressed to Peter: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." This giving was future to the time of speaking; it arrived on the "day of Pentecost." But only "one key" was given to Peter on that day, and that "one" for the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven to believing Israel, assembled from "out of every nation which is under Heaven." It was three and a-half years after this that Peter received the other "key" for opening the same Kingdom to believing Gentiles, as in Acts, 10th chapter. The Kingdom thus "opened" with the two keys by Peter was the "Great Salvation"; it was "for His Name." Although in the first century of its opening there were determined efforts of men—Jews, Gentiles—to "shut" the opened Kingdom, all failed. The same obtained century after century, and the arrival of the wonderful "time of the end" with the 19th of these.

The opened Kingdom was available to everyone anxious, eager, to enter, after hearing the gracious invitation to "Come unto Him" of "the Beloved." From the opening of "the time of the end" and the restored "one hope," the one "blessed hope," made the "Kingdom" to be comprised in the "Church in Philadelphia," and the "Church of the Laodiceans" to comprise all sects and denominations outside. But this changed order to the appearing of Christ's sign did not require any further use of "keys" to those used by Peter at the dual opening of the Kingdom for admission of eager-seekers. Keys were required and used during the 130 years to the appearing of Christ's sign in opening to the "wise" the due truths that were, as in Daniel 12:9, 10: "Closed and sealed till the time of the end." In each generation of the "time of the end" believing and confessing the particular "due truth" opened has separated the "wise" from both foolish and wicked and prepared them for Christ's Name.

But the appearing of Christ's sign made imperatively necessary the use by Him of a "key" never previously used,

in order to realise the matter of Revelation 3:8: "Behold, I have set before **thee** an open door, and no man can shut it." Only the One with "all power" could set this altogether isolated open door and effectively hinder any "man from shutting it." It is necessary only to understand all that this "open door" admits to in order to delightedly confess the operation of "the key of the David" in its setting open.

And the references to other "keys" and their openings when rightly understood not only display the much-diversified wisdom of the Divine mind and purpose, but the more manifest the isolated and superlative nature of the "open door" to Philadelphians at the appearing of Christ's sign. For the course of the Gospel Age, and since His ascension on high, "the David" has had in His possession, and as parts of His comprehensive key, the two "keys" referred to by Himself, as in Revelation 1:18: "I am **He** that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and **have the keys of Hades and of Death.**" Here is a first realisation of the promise to Abraham, in Genesis 22:17, last clause: "And thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies." It is after using these keys of the "gates" in the liberating of all locked in by them that there is the realisation of the second matter of promise, in verse 18: "**And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.**"

Another "key" and also part of "the key of the David," and which might easily and wrongly be confounded with the isolated matter of the "open door" to Philadelphians, as in Revelation 3:8, is the beautiful theme of Isaiah 22:22: "And the key of the House of David will I lay upon His shoulder; so He shall open, and none shall shut, and He shall shut, and none shall open." This "David" is not "the David"; and his "House" is not "the David's House." The key of the House of David is only one part of "the key of the David" referred to in Revelation 3:8. The House of David referred to in Isaiah 22:22, as in connected references, is the **Kingdom of Israel**. This Kingdom is not "the House of Christ, the Beloved." Israel refused and refuses Christ throughout the age during which Christ's **House** is being built up. In Hebrews

3:6-14 there are these words addressed to the ones referred to in verse 1 as "holy brethren partakers of the Heavenly calling," and **not** to the nation of Israel: "But Christ as a Son over His own House; whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope unto the end." It is on account of His own House, and **not** the House of David, the nation of Israel, that He is in Heaven as their High Priest, as recorded in Hebrews 4:14: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the Heavens." Not until after His return to the earth and the removal of Israel's blindness does He become High Priest of the House of David, the nation of Israel.

Even in referring to Christ's reign over Israel, it is not that of **His own House**, but as in Luke 1:33 and of Gabriel's words to Mary: "And He shall reign over the **House of Jacob** for the age; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." During the age of the building up of Christ's House, the House of David is "fallen down, in ruins," and the House of Jacob—the children of Israel—are scattered as sheep without a shepherd **away from God**. The reference in Acts 15:16 is in regard to Israel as a **Kingdom**, as distinguished from the same Israel as a scattered people, the "House or Children of Jacob": "After this" (taking out of the Gentiles of a people for His Name) "I will return, and will build again the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up."

This is the matter of Isaiah 22:22. "**The David**" is the restorer of the "House of David, the House of Jacob, the Children of Israel," after He has built and glorified His own House. All power vested in Him makes Him the Hope of Israel as of every Gentile. "**The key of the House of David**" laid on His shoulder is but one part of "**the key of the David**." And with the opening to the House of David of a door to restoration and latter-day glory reaching to eternal life, there is the like as with the "**open door**" to Philadelphians, in the words: "So He shall open, and **none** shall shut." Nothing could be more beautiful than these differences in regard to the various "**keys**" and their uses, and of their being all comprised in the one great "**key**"—**the key of the David**.

We must now pass on to observe that the "open door" set before the "Angel of the Philadelphians" first leads into new "due truth." Not even the commended keeping of the previous "word" dispenses with the need for moving forward with the due truth provided by the "open door." The era succeeding Christ's sign and to His coming is the most fruitful of the whole "time of the end" in unsealing things previously "closed and sealed." The whole of this is comprised in the pregnant term used in Revelation 3:10: "The Word of My patience." It is very beautiful to note that the commendation in verse 8 applies at the setting of the "open door," and to the course pursued previously; that in verse 10 applies at the closing of the door, and to the course of its being open.. Between the speaking, as in verse 8 and verse 10, there is the era to His coming: "Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience."

The two speakings of these verses mark the commencement and end of the era to Christ's coming, the second one, that of verse 10 (and also verse 9 to be noted later) being part of His "shout." So the "thou" addressed in verse 10 is far more numerous than the "thou" addressed in verse 8: "Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience"—as in verse 10—includes all gathered during the era then ended by the preached "Word of His patience," and not only the "Messenger" community. The several mention of "thou, thy" in verse 8 and at the setting of the "open door," all refer to the "Messenger": "I know thy works; I have set before thee an open door; for thou has a little strength." God's speaking to Noah, as in Genesis 6:18, was to the "thou" of himself and his wife; the speaking 120 years later, as in Genesis 7:1, included his "**House**" grown up between the two speakings. So with the likeness in Rev. 3:8, 10, as also with the more numerous "ye" addressed in Luke 21:34, 36, to those in verses 28-31. The "ye" addressed in Luke 21:28-31 are the same "Mesenger" community as the "thou" of Rev. 3:8; the more numerous "ye" of Luke 21:34-36 are the same as the more numerous "thou" in Rev. 3:10 to the "thou" of verse 8.

It is necessary to note here that the announcement in Rev. 3:11 also dates from the same time as that of the "open door," as in verse 8: "Behold, I come quickly; hold

fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." As the coming of the day of entry into the Ark and succeeding coming of the Flood were both dated from the day of God's speaking to the world and to Noah, so with this announced "coming quickly" in Rev. 3:11, it dates from the appearing of Christ's dual sign, and it comprehends both His comings illustrated by the two in "the days of Noah." Previous to the era of this announced "coming quickly" not any such had commenced. Christ was not coming quickly until His sign appeared in the affairs of the earth. Since then every day has the more emphasised that He is coming quickly, as also that the era to His coming is a short one. "After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh" is the matter of Matt. 25:19, and of the time of absence, and which the more emphasises the one of the era of coming: "Behold I come quickly." Although long to our times of life, 120 years of the era of coming was about one-eighth of the length of Noah's life, and so was a "coming quickly" to him and that world.

Since the announced "coming quickly" in Rev. 3:11, in dating from the appearing of Christ's sign, also comprehends the era to its realisation, then the "thou" addressed and exhorted comprise all those of the two references to "thou" in verses 8 and 10. "Hold fast that which thou hast" includes all laying hold of that referred to during the era of His coming quickly, and not only those first receiving and laying hold of it. That which is to be held "fast" by every individual "thou" of the collective "thou" addressed is received as the result of the "open door." In verse 10 and a later theme of address there is one definition of that received by each and to be held "fast": "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience." In Luke 21:28 another definition is that of "your redemption." The new Word of His patience promises this new, exceptional "redemption," and which has the dual definition in Rev. 14:3, 4 of "from he earth, and from among men." "Holding fast" the certainty of this redemption is realised by "keeping the Word of His patience"; not letting it slip, not losing it, the redemption is certain then.

The next clause of Rev. 3:11 has mention of another wonderful certainty by simply "holding fast," and which

the more manifests the marvellous privileges conferred by the "open door": "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." In this there is not the mention of "man," as in the Author Version, but "no one." The only possible "taking of thy crown" would be from those addressed; no one else could take it for themselves, for, as in 2nd Timothy 4:8, "Loving His appearing" is a necessity to obtaining a crown. And there are as many of these glorious "crowns" as there are **lovers** of His appearing. And here is the key to the appeal (not warning) to "hold fast that no one take thy crown." By ceasing to love His appearing, by other things creeping in and interfering with the one undivided love, and by the things specified in the appeal in Luke 21:34, it is alone possible to have the crown "taken." The matter of Luke 21:34 is explanation of the appeal in Rev. 3:11; the "thou and thy" of the one verse are the "you, yourselves" of the other.

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Knowing the weaknesses of human flesh, Christ appealed to the privileged "you, thou," to be ever watchful and "hold fast that which thou hast." That which every one of those addressed has, is the promise of the exceptional redemption, by believing the "Word of His patience." Not any of these during the era to His coming is in possession of their "crown." But each one when believing the truth of the "open door—the Word of His patience"—shares in the certain promise of redemption at Christ's coming, and this is the "crown of life," the partaking of the nature of Christ. The "crown" for all lovers of His appearing is unlike those worn by human royalties, by "the Kings of the earth," and which is but an adorning of a flesh body. A royal nature in immortal substance is the "crown of life."

But not to any of Christ's people of previous times to the appearing of His signs—including the Apostles—was there the like matter spoken as that to the ones addressed in Rev. 3:11: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." It was not until Paul could say that written in 2nd Timothy 4:4, 5, that he could add the matter of verse 8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time

of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Only then and not before could he add the words of verse 8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Although the Apostle was assured of his crown at that stage, it was not then available, but was "laid up" until the day of His appearing.. But each of the ones addressed in Rev. 3:11 receives the certain promise of their crown when they enter the new "open door" on the sole requirement of "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." There is not any "laying up" of the crowns of these to a long-distant time as there was even with Paul's.

Even before Paul and all the other Apostles and faithful of some 60 generations receive their crowns, the privileged "Philadelphiaans" addressed in this message will all be guaranteed theirs by Christ's shout from Heaven. For the succeeding short era of the "interval" to their crowning at Christ's descent from Heaven a particular and most wonderful service is required of these last of Christ's people, and which marks another of their isolated privileges.

A striking likeness in this matter of the "crown" with each Philadelphian is presented in Hebrews 11:7, and of the result of Noah's faith as expressed in the building of the Ark: "By the which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." It was as the direct result of Noah's obedient faith, during that era of respite as manifest in the building of the Ark, that he obtained the certain promise of celestial glory. The difference between Noah's crown of life guaranteed at the end of that era and those of Christ's people is only in texture; both are celestial in kind.

The designating of the due truth of the "open door" in Rev. 3:10 as "the Word of My patience" is particularly becoming and powerfully suggestive. Its first significance is that of the likeness with the Word of God's patience during "the days of Noah," as in 1st Peter 3:20: "Which sometime were disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." Only those who have learned from Christ's comparisons and forecasts of the exact like-

ness with the world of Noah's days and the living world can understand how Christ views our world and the almost universal neglect of "the Word of His patience." Moreover, the same two forms of "disobedience" revealed and stressed by Christ are daily and universally being done, even by large numbers of His professed followers who are telling others of His near coming.

Every day since His sign appeared Christ is patiently waiting, both for the unknown day and hour of His own coming, and for the loving faith and obedience of as many as are willing and anxious to receive the exceptional redemption, as the free gift of His abounding Grace. Only the few who have delightedly entered the "open door," believed the "Word of His patience," know of the ever-increasing "due truth" available for the meat and drink of "the household of faith." The promised guidance into all truth, in John 16:13, is being fulfilled during the present era as never before.

- There is not any associating of "**My patience**" with the approving mention in Rev. 3:8 of the works, strength and faith of the "angel" community during the times ending with the "open door," even in referring to "**My Word**": "And has kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name." And this same mention of "**My Word**" without any additions is the order of Christ's speaking to the last days until the era of the open door, as marked in such Scriptures as John 5:24: "He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me." This serves to make manifest that there are additions, further matters unfolded, new features presented in "the Word of His patience," made necessary by the closing era of His "coming quickly." The fact of the "angel" community being the only one of living mankind receiving His approval for previous faith in His Word testified to the state of all others, religious and irreligious, at the time of Christ's sign. To the appearing of that "sign" the religious portion of mankind comprised the "Church of the Laodiceans," and were in the state recorded in Rev. 3:17, as any honest and close observer could easily recognise.

"Thou sayest I am rich, and increased in goods, **and have need of nothing**; and knowest not that thou art

wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." This "saying" was the reply to the preaching of the "angel community" from all sects and denominations ^{Before} Christ's sign appeared, and to the "My Word" then preached by them. And the beautiful "counsel" of verse 18, as also the "standing and knocking at the door" of verse 20, have reference to "the Word of My patience" and the era of the "open door." It is during this era of His own "open door" that Christ knocks at the "closed door" of every "Laodicean" and presents this lovely counsel: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou **mayest** be rich; and white raiment that thou **mayest** be clothed and the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou **mayest** see." It is Christ's desire that all these will accept His counsel, enter His "open door and keep the Word of His patience" during the short time of His "coming quickly."

Neither "the Church of the Laodiceans" nor the world are condemned for their neglect and rejection of the "My Word" of previous times at the coming of the era to His appearing. The attitude to the "Word of His patience" during this "era" is the determining factor, as it was in the days of Noah. The Divine estimate of the state of the world at the appearing of Christ's sign is that written of the state of the world at the commencing era of respite, in Genesis 6:5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually." And even the prevailing theory of living in "advanced days of light and knowledge" has likeness with the sentiments of the world in "the days of Noah," as it is the opposite of such definitions of our times as that of Isaiah 60:2: "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." Only by obtaining and using the precious "eye salve" referred to in Rev. 3:18 is it possible to see our world and times as God and Christ see them.

"Laodiceans, neither hot nor cold" in their attitude to the "My Word" of the "time of the end," reaching to the new open door and its "Word of My patience," was Christ's designation of the religious world, lukewarm. There was not the Divine use of the designation of "Syna-

gogue of Satan," as in Rev. 3:9, during the 130 years of the "time of the end" to the appearing of Christ's sign, but that of "the Church of the Laodiceans," in a parallel connection. As previously considered, "the Church at Philadelphia," in its second expression to the first of the days of the Apostles, and marked in Rev. 3:7-11, commenced with the 19th century, and in the uprising of the new "Second Advent Movement." This was the fulfilment of Matt. 25:1 : "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the Bridegroom." The Divine cause on earth was wholly comprised within that movement. The second expression to the first of Apostolic times of "The Church of the Laodiceans" had its commencement at this same era, and comprised all sects and denominations outside of the "Second Advent Movement." Profession of the faith of Christ from this marked beginning to that of the appearing of Christ's sign included all in one or other of these two "Chufches."

But there are not "two Churches" mentioned in Rev. 3:9, and at the era of Christ shout, although there were at the opening of that era at His sign. One Church and a "Synagogue" are the two in this verse. Moreover, the anomaly of "foolish virgins" and their previous association with the "Church at Philadelphia"—Second Advent Movement—is absent in the matter in Rev. 3:9 and the era of Christ's shout. The association of the same ones designated "foolish virgins in Matt. 25: 2, 3, 8, with the "Synagogue of Satan," and one extraordinary feature of their beliefs are two matters referred to in Rev. 3:9, with others to be noted later. Only one class is in "the Church of the Philadelphians" from His sign to His shout, and included in the "thou" entering the open door and "keeping the Word of My patience." Foolish virgins and all others professing Christ's faith, neglecting or refusing the "Word of Christ's patience," comprise "the Synagogue of Satan" referred to in the first clause of Rev. 3:9. The differences of "Protestants, Roman and Greek Catholics" are those of human ideas, as also the use of the term "Babylon" to any of these sections during the present era of Christ's "coming quickly." In the revealed Divine estimate, the religious

portion of living mankind comprises one Church of Christ and one Synagogue of Satan, since Christ's sign appeared and to his shout. Both these are distinguished from the bigger "world" of the irreligious around them, also referred to in Rev. 3:10, and in a connection to be considered later.

The world does not agree with any of the matters of "the Word of His patience"; does not believe in any existing "open door" to exceptional redemption, and in this, as in other matters of later consideration, shares in the "adversary" or Satan state of the one "Synagogue." It is thus manifest that the use of "the Synagogue of Satan" in Rev. 3:9, and at the era of Christ's shout, marks the last stage of "the Church of the Laodiceans," as it realises the forecast of Rev. 3:16. The "lukewarm" condition continues during the era to His coming, His shout, and manifests an "adversary" state to the "Word of His patience," combined with such hostility as the times permit, and scornful references to it and to those believing it. Here is the force of "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will eject thee out of My mouth." This is done at the era of Rev. 3:9, of His shout and the succeeding "interval," and when living humanity learns that existing religious sects and divisions are not Christ's Church, and of the ones comprising that Church. Here again is the matter of the coming "universal meetings" already mentioned.

"The Church of the Laodiceans" for the course of "the time of the end" to the appearing of Christ's sign passes into the "Synagogue of Satan" by continuing "lukewarm," by neglect, by rejection, by speaking against the "Word of His patience" and the wonderful open door during the era to His coming. In Rev. 3:8, and in the announced setting of "an open door," there are the added words, "and no man can shut it," with powerful bearing on the short era of its opening. Not anyone has passed through that open door and into the receiving and "keeping the Word of His patience" without being tested by the efforts of some "man or men" to shut the door. The times have not permitted the display of "violence" in the methods of seeking to "shut the door," but they have

allowed as they have witnessed the operation of all other kinds. In this there is presented further evidence of the suspension of the previous universal "violence" recorded twice in Genesis 6:11-13, so far as Noah's building of the Ark and preaching were concerned. Not anyone violently interfered with Noah in these two services of faithful obedience; not any dared to do so.

"Synagogue" is an honourable, as it is an ancient, designation of sacred associations of worship. Its use in Rev. 3:9, and apart from such connections, does not interfere with them any more than that of "Church" having such diverse significance with Philadelphia and Laodicea, or that "men or women" can be used in application to good and bad. But "Synagogue of Satan," or, more correctly, "the adversary," at once determines the character, as the use of "the Synagogue of the adversary" does of it being the **only** one of its class, in contrast with the use of "the" to the angel and Church in Philadelphia. Christ's revealed estimates of the religious portion of living mankind are that the One Church and the One Synagogue comprise all these. Only His estimate is correct, and is, therefore, the one also of all His true people, and which is manifest in their associations of fellowship and worship. All talk of the "reunion of Christendom" is shown by Christ's estimate as foolish: He has, by "the Word of His patience," consolidated His Church in the **one** class, and done the same with the one Synagogue comprising the **one** class of adversaries.

"Synagogue" in its first significance had and has application to buildings erected by the people of Israel for worship of the one true God. A reference in Acts 15:21, spoken by inspiration of James at the conference at Jerusalem some twenty years after Christ's resurrection, has deeply interesting significance. It testifies to the erection of Synagogues in Gentile cities long before the Christian era by the scattered people of Israel. Many modern speculators on "Lost Israel" would profit by deeply pondering this verse and its indications: "For Moses from generations of old hath in **every city** them that preach him being read in the **Synagogues** every Sabbath." Some of these same Synagogues in Asia Minor, as in Europe, have prominence

in Paul's missionary tours. But the list of countries recorded in Acts 2:5, 8-11, from which Peter's audience at Pentecost were brought, gives even a bigger conception of the very large numbers of "Synagogues" said by James to be in "every city."

Those rightly instructed in the fact and cause of the "blindness of all Israel" for the whole Gospel Age, and its **impending alteration**, can the better appreciate the unalterable respect for their "Synagogues" of this scattered people. A striking prophetic forecast having powerful bearing on the use of "Synagogue" in Rev. 3:9 in its contrasts is presented in Isaiah 60:2: "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the **people**: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen **upon thee**." The "people" of this reference are living Gentiles, and the twice mentioned "thee" are living Israel in all Gentile lands, together with those in the land of Palestine, and comprising the "**tender branch**" of the budding fig tree. Israel is soon to pass out of her age-lasting "blindness and darkness" and severe experiences for her neglect and refusal of light and opportunity, and living Gentiles, "**adversaries**" to the "**Word of His patience**," are to pass in to the state that Israel has experienced for the Gospel Age.

"Synagogue" is also employed of the polity of the Jewish people, as used in John 16:2 and by Christ to His disciples. "They shall put you **out of the Synagogues**" indicated far more than being ejected from buildings. It signified being cut off from the fellowship and privileges of the people of their nation, made outcasts from Israel. For the Gospel Age the people and religious polity of Israel have been "**the enemies**" of Christ and His Gospel, so that the "Synagogue" of Israel down to the appearing of Christ's sign was the one of "**adversaries**." But living Gentiles are, by neglect of unprecedented privileges and opposition to the "**Word of His patience**," proving themselves as successors to Israel as **adversaries**. And the religious section of living Gentiles become by their attitude to the "**due truth**" of Christ "**the Synagogue of Satan**" referred to in Rev. 3:9.

Section Five.

As will be manifest from later tracings in the succeeding chapter of this work, the very striking matters of Rev. 3:9 have full realisation at and succeeding Christ's shout: "Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Not any such dual "making" takes place during the era to His shout, even though the "Synagogue of Satan" exists and comprises all religious communities, outside of the "angel and Church in Philadelphia." The different time of application of verse 9 to that of verse 8 is clearly marked, as also that verse 10 applies at the same era as verse 9, succeeding that of verse 8. This is the matter of verse 10, and which can readily be recognised as of the like character as that of verse 9: "Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience; I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Not until there has been the proved "holding fast" of this Word is there the addressing of the "thou" in the promise of this 10th verse. And the same obtains in the different promise of verse 9—the "making" of others to come and worship before the feet of the same "thou." And the respective matters of the two verses—9, 10—serve to display the "thou" addressed as the only ones of universal mankind as approved by Christ at the era marked. The use in verse 9 of the term "Synagogue of Satan," the forecasted "making" of specified ones of that "Synagogue" to come and worship before the feet of the approved "thou," present one aspect of the isolation of "Philadelphia." The universal aspect presented in verse 10 does not distinguish between the "Synagogue of Satan" and those of living mankind outside of it, but includes all within it as part of the "world" to be "tried," as well as in the term "Them that dwell upon the earth."

The removal from the earth and to the Home of the Father and Son of approved "Philadelphia" realises the "keeping" promised in verse 10: "Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial which shall come upon all the world, to try

them that dwell upon the earth." All others save the faithful "thou" are to experience this "hour of trial," on account of their **not keeping** "the Word of His patience." Assuredly only once in all previous human history was living mankind (world, them that dwell upon the earth) in a parallel position to the one forecasted in this 10th verse. Never previously, save in "the days of Noah," has the adult population of the earth been made amenable to continued life or death on the earth by their attitude to the Word of God. And not even in the "days of Noah" did universal man have the like offer of exceptional redemption to celestial glory in eternal life, apart from death, like the living world has. Even Noah, in obtaining the promise of celestial inheritance as well as deliverance from the Flood by his obedient faith, did not at once enter "celestial" glory.

It is only in this 10th verse applying at the time of Christ's shout, and not in the 8th and the era of His sign and the setting of the "open door," that there is the use of "Word of My patience" to the "due truth" of the open door, and that the "world" is brought into the comparison presented. In verse 8 there are these words and which were addressed only to the "Angel of the Church in Philadelphia," as in verse 7: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." But, and as stressed in verse 10, this "setting" was for the purpose of providing the most effective means of universal enlightenment and opportunity regarding the same "open door." The fact of all entering it becoming constituents of the "Church in Philadelphia," and of all not entering it being comprised in the "world" to experience the "hour of trial" parallel with the Flood, are prominent matters in these verses.

So tremendously important in this universal testing in the regard to "exceptional redemption," during the era from Christ's sign to His shout, that there are other particular forecasts to the ones already noted. These are as "particular" in marking the ending of the gracious offer as Christ's parables of the "Fig Tree and all the Trees" and the "setting of the open door" are in marking its commencement. And in these, as in Revelation 3:8-10, there is the connecting with the previous course for the era then

ending, both with Christ's proved and tested people and with all others of mankind outside of them. The section in Revelation 14:1-5 is one of these "particular" forecasts in their two features just mentioned. The matter which is of necessity last in Christ's forecast of the era from His sign to His shout is the first in this one in Rev. 14:1. Christ's forecast in Luke 21:26-36 traces from the appearing of His sign to the "**standing before Him**" of all on earth prepared by it and associated "due truth" for that "**standing**," and their constant watching and prayer.

The forecast in Revelation 14:1-5 traces back from the "**standing**" through the era then ended. In Luke 21:3 there is this terminus from the beginning marked in the matters of verses 28-31: "**Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.**" Only in the regard of this promised exception of redemption—as in verse 28—is there the use of "**standing before**" Christ as the terminus of the life of faith. The one order with all Christ's people of the Gospel age, and to the appearing of His sign and the promise of exceptional redemption, is that of threefold mention in John 6:40, 45-54: "**And I will raise Him up at the last day.**" This is also connected with other Scriptures, such as 1st Corinthians 15:6, 18: "**Some are fallen asleep; they also which are fallen asleep in Christ.**" With the parallel references to these in 1st Thess. 4:14, 15, there is in verse 16 the words "**And the dead in Christ shall rise first.**"

"Fallen, raising up, rising," are all indications of different state to that of Christ's promise and exhortation in Luke 21:34: "**Accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.**" All others of Christ's people of previous times are also exempt from any association with the "**things that shall come to pass,**" even though their **rising** is at the time when there is the commencing of the "**coming to pass**" of the things. The "**standing ones**" are thus distinguished from all others of Christ's people, as they are from all the world left on the earth to experience the "**things that shall come to pass.**" Only the world of Noah's days experienced the Flood, and only Noah and his house, of all the people of God from Abel, "**escaped**" it by "**standing**" justified

God's sight. In this regard of "exceptional redemption" to celestial glory, the standing ones of Christ's people experience a far more glorious "escape" than that of Noah and his house.

The accomplishing of this "escaping and standing" is the first matter in the forecast in Revelation 14:1-5. These are the wonderful words of the first verse: "And I looked, and, lo, the lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads." The exceptional redemption of these standing ones is responsible for the use of "The Lamb" as the particular designation of "The Son of Man." The sharing of His "standing"—of standing "with Him"—further emphasises that the exceptional redemption is on His account. Not any of these "standing" ones were worthy in themselves to "escape and stand," but only through Him and by faith in Him. This is still further made manifest by the revealed locality of the "standing—on the Mount Sion." Earthly Jerusalem has been designated "Daughter of Sion, Mount Sion," for long past times as well as in forecasts of coming things. But "the Mount Sion," as in Revelation 14:1, is not only the "mother" to earthly Jerusalem and Mount Sion, but also, as in Galat. 4:26, "the mother of us all." This universal motherhood of "Jerusalem above" is still future, commencing with the bringing into celestial glory of the subjects of the First Resurrection, and completing her "bringing forth of children" in the Last Resurrection and to the "terrestrial" glory of the spiritual nature of all others.

Not any of earth's inhabitants are worthy to enter the Divine Home and Presence, apart from the provision made through the Lamb. In 1st Timothy 6:16 and of the Divine Being and Home it is recorded: "Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." And in Hebrews 9:12-24, the entrance of Christ by virtue of His own blood—or sacrifice—into the Divine Home and Presence has this accomplished result: "Now to appear in the Presence of God for us." These "us" all enter heaven through Him, in His nature.

In the forecast in Luke 21:36 there is not any mention of the locality of "standing before the Son of Man," but only of the standing itself. And in the forecasted order of

meeting Christ in "the air," and being conducted by Him to the Father's Home and Presence, these "standing ones" are caught away from the earth after all the *sleeping ones* have been raised in His Presence. But in several matters of Rev. 14:1, as in the succeeding ones of verses 3-5, only the "standing ones" are referred to. The second feature to the first of "standing" is that of their numbers—"an hundred forty and four thousand." These, manifestly, are as accurate as the fact and locality of their standing with the Lamb, and are the more marked in this regard by the contrast with the unrevealed totality of the whole community of Christ's people of the Gospel age. In Rev. 7:9 there is this mention of human inability to even approximate the numbers of the whole community, because of these being unrevealed and **not** because they are beyond computation: "A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the Throne, and **before the Lamb.**"

The distinguishing of these in their "standing" from the **numbered ones** in Rev. 14:1 the more emphasises the particular matter revealed, since all the numbered ones of Rev. 14:1 are included in the "great multitude" of Rev. 7:9, but not any save the numbered ones are referred to in Rev. 14:1. The absence of mention in this verse of the numbered ones being out of "all nations, kindreds, people and tongues" is fully provided for in the universal comparisons in verses 3-5, as well as the other associations of Rev. 7:9. And Christ's speaking to the "**ye**" in His parables of "The Fig Tree and all the Trees," and in Rev. 3:8-10 to "The Angel and Church in Philadelphia," further manifests the universal area from which the "hundred forty and four thousand" have been gathered.

And the number of these final constituents of Christ's composite "joint heirs" are the answer to His own question in Luke 18:8, and in the association of a very beautiful little parable: "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Although to uninstructed human ideas these numbers may appear very small, as the product of the years from Christ's sign to His shout, the "object lesson" in Noah's days suggests a striking comparison. The numbers of Noah's house at the end of the era of respite were four times those at its beginning.

Noah and his wife were the two bearing likeness with the "angel and Church in Philadelphia" at the appearing of Christ's sign. A house of eight persons at the terminus bears likeness with the one hundred forty and four thousand, of the same "angel and Church" at Christ's shout. Thus there was far less real faith on earth—true believers—at the appearing of Christ's sign than when His shout goes forth. The truths of the "open door" have averted the almost universal decay of faith on earth, and produced—in the Divine estimate—a community of "victors" unique in the history of the age.

Just as these are the only ones to "stand before the Son of Man," so with the two "writings" recorded in the last clause of Rev. 14:1: "Having His Name and the Name of His Father written on their foreheads." This "writing on the foreheads" was done with this company before they "stand with the Lamb," as it is a cause of that standing. This same matter is an explanation of that which is comprised in "the Word of My patience," as in Rev. 3:10, and kept by all this company during the era to His shout. There is a marked difference between "sealing with the Holy Spirit" and this "writing on the forehead" of the Name of Christ and the Name of the Father. As defined in Ephes. 1:13, and with application to every generation of the Gospel Age, the "sealing" of Holy Spirit takes place within each believer at the time of their first exercise of true faith: "In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." In 2nd Corinth. 1.22 there are these words:

"Who also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in **our hearts.**" The numbered company, as in Rev. 14:1, shared with all others of previous times in this "sealing in the heart" by Holy Spirit, after they believed. But it is after their first believing and as they were led deeper and deeper into understanding of the written Word of the Father and Son that the Names of both were "written on their foreheads." There is a comparison with this writing on the foreheads in Rev. 13:16, but not any with the "sealing in the heart" by Holy Spirit: "And he causeth all,

both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads." This has particular application to the times recorded in verse 5—"forty and two months," or 1260 years, reaching to "the time of the end," the opening of the 19th century. "Power" to enforce this "mark of the beast" on living mankind was taken away. But this still left the same "marking" as obtaining with all ready to receive that which still comprises this "mark."

Since the giving of the "right hand" is the pledge of friendship and fellowship, its "marking" signified that all such as received the system of belief and doctrine imposed on living mankind of those times were in its fellowship. The "forehead" is the seat of the reasoning and intellectual powers, and when "marked" with the right hand there is indicated the full assent to all presented for belief and obedience by the one doing the "marking." In both these—marking the hand and forehead—there is connection with the custom of branding slaves with the name of their master in their hand and forehead. In Rev. 13th chapter, and the recording of this "marking" of the "all," there is the mention of the saints of the same times as being made war upon because they would not receive this "mark." But it is not recorded of any of the saints of those terrible times that the Names of the Son and the Father were "written in their foreheads," even though all these were "sealed in their hearts by the Holy Spirit."

It is in agreement with the fact of the numbered ones in Rev. 14:1, being the final "angel and Church in Philadelphia" at Christ's shout, that the particular promise to all overcomers included in the message to them is that of Rev. 3.12. All comprised in the "angel and Church" addressed in Christ's "shout," by keeping the Word of His patience had proved themselves "pillars," and had received the "writing in their foreheads" of the Names of the Son and the Father: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the City of My God, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new Name."

This "writing upon them" is to obtain with every overcomer when meeting Christ and receiving His nature and glory. It is not said in this forecast as it is said in Rev. 14:1, and of the numbered standing ones, of the writing being "on the forehead." Moreover, the "writing" on every overcomer is the matter of promise as in Rev. 3:12, "I will write." But in Rev. 14:1, and the use of "having" there is the association with a then past of the "writing" itself. "Having His Name and the Name of His Father written on their foreheads" refers to that which had taken place before the standing with the Lamb on the Mount Sion, and which was limited to these numbered ones.

The Author. Version of Rev. 14:1 does not mention "His Name," but only "His Father's Name written on their foreheads." The "Original" Scriptures contain both, and becomingly. And as in Rev. 3:12, so in Rev. 14:1, the Name of the Lamb—of the Son of Man—written on the foreheads of the numbered ones, is his "new Name." Before, as at His coming into the world, His personal Name was "Christ Jesus." In Philip, 2:5, 6, and referring to the time when He was with the Father, and in the "substance" of the Father, long times before He became flesh on earth there are these words: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." And in 1st Timothy 1:15 there are the precious words which thrill everyone who knows self to be the particular one referred to as the object of His coming: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." The official Name of "Christ Jesus" at His birth at Bethlehem was that of Matt. 1:23, and which was the prophetic theme of Isaiah 7:14: "And they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us."

As previously noted, several times during Christ's ministry He was addressed from Heaven as "My beloved Son." But Philip. 2:8, 9 reveals that it was as the result of His humility and obedience—"unto death, even the death of the cross—that God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every other Name." And this is "His new Name" referred to in Rev. 3:12, as it is the one

referred to in Rev. 14:1, written on the foreheads of the numbered ones standing with Him. We have considered in a previous section that the Name above every other name is that of "**the Beloved**," given to the Resurrected and glorified Lord as His "**new Name**." And although all His people of the Gospel Age are—as in Ephes. 1:6—"Accepted in the Beloved," only of the numbered ones, as in Rev. 14:1, is it declared that this Name is "written on their foreheads."

It is by the wonderful truths comprised in "the Word of His patience," the ever-increasing light during the era from His sign to His shout on the Divine Purpose accomplished by "**the Beloved**," that every Philadelphian has understanding of "**the Beloved**" beyond that of others of previous generations. So accurate and complete is this "understanding" with every one of the numbered ones in the regard of "**His name**" that in verse 5—Rev. 14—it is declared that, "In their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the Throne of God." Only by having clear and full understanding of that purpose bound up in "**His Name and the Name of His Father**" is it possible to have a mouth entirely free from "guile"—error, lies. And this guileless mouth as the result of the "**writing**" on the foreheads also proves the inseparable connection between the "forehead and the heart," or between the understanding and the affections.

The "**sealing in the heart**" of each of these numbered ones has this ultimate of the "**writing on their foreheads**." Not any but the sealed in heart can have "**His Name and the Name of His Father** written on their foreheads." In Rev. 14:5 the guileless mouth is presented as the connection with this "**writing on the forehead**," as in verse 1, and apart from any mention of the "**heart**." But in all other references to the use of the "**mouth**" there is the connection of the "**heart**," and which the more displays the isolated matter of Rev. 14:1-5. One of these latter is in Romans 10: 9, 10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the **heart** man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This

"believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth" has obtained with all Christ's people of the Gospel Age as with the numbered ones of Rev. 14:1-3. But the "numbered ones" are the only ones of whom it is recorded, "Having His Name and the Name of His Father written on their foreheads."

The totally different matter of "writing" referred to in Rev. 3:12 and on all "overcomers" has also very beautiful significance in its threefold operation, as also the promise in Rev. 2:17 of each of these receiving a "new name": "And I will write upon him the Name of My God; and the name of the City of My God, New Jerusalem . . . and I will write upon him My new Name." This threefold writing is accomplished when all "overcomers" become united to the "Bridegroom." All these become with Him "the Beloved"—His new Name is given to each. And all these, by being "joint heirs with Christ," are the "heirs of God," with His Name on them. "New Jerusalem" is the Father's gift to "the Beloved" as their "City"; they are its "citizens"; they have—as in Rev. 22:14—"Right to enter in through its gates."

The "writing on their foreheads" is also of "His Father's Name," as in Rev. 14:1. This use of "His Father's Name" brings to remembrance Christ's words of several mention of "My Father." In John 20:17 there are these diverse definitions in Christ's words to Mary Magdalene: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to **My Father**; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto **My Father**, and your Father; and to **My God**, and your God." When Christ came into the world, and to Israel as its particular portion, it was by the sending of His Father, and for the manifesting of His Father's Name. And it is by believing in Christ "and the Father which sent Him" that "**His Father**" becomes the "your Father" of Christ's reference. In Galat. 3:26 this new particular family relationship with the Father is thus defined: "For ye are all the children of God by **faith in Christ Jesus**" marks an expression of "your Father."

Christ not only came from the Father's Nature when coming into the different one of the flesh, but returned to that nature after His Resurrection. In both there is par-

ticular significance of "**My Father**," and which has its bearing on the matter of Rev. 14:1: "Having His Name and **His Father's Name** written on their foreheads." God is the "your Father" of all these by their faith in Christ Jesus, but at the era of this "writing" only Christ is in the nature of the Father, and it is through Him that His Father becomes theirs.

With the Father, as with Christ, "**His Name**" stands for what He is, as distinct from any relationship to others. Father and Son are relationships, and not the "**names**" of each. God, Almighty, Creator are other relationships, and not the "**Name**" of the "one" involved in each. In John 5:43 there are the words of Christ in a distinct application to the many others referring to His coming: "I am come in My Father's **Name**, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his **own name**, him ye will receive." This same "**Name of the Father**" is the matter of Christ's later reference at the Last Supper recorded in John 17:6: "I have manifested **Thy Name** unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world." This was more than telling them of His Father and of the Father's purposes. To "manifest the Name of the Father" was to live and act before the disciples all that which was bound up in the Father's Name. Christ **lived the Father's Name** in the presence of His disciples. Here is the matter of Christ's further reference at the Last Supper, as recorded in John 14:8, 9: "Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Philip had not thus "seen him," nor the great majority of the people of Israel, even though they had looked upon and listened to Jesus for the years of His ministry. Christ **had** "manifested His father's Name" before them. And that "**Name**" comprises all that the Father **is**, as the "**new Name**" of the Son does of all that He **is**. The name "**Jesus**," as in Matt. 1:21, has the significance of "**Saviour**," and is the same in Hebrew as the name "**Joshua**," and so was given to others as well as the Son of God. The same obtained with the name "**Christ-Anointed**," as applied to the Kings of Israel, and which

explains the use of "The Christ" in such references as John 7:26, John 10:24.

But the "Name which is above every other Name" is given only to the One to Whom it could apply and express all that He is. And this Name is not only His "new Name," but became His, on account of His "manifesting the Name" of His Father on earth and before men while He was in the flesh. Not any other in the universe could be properly named "The Beloved," even though a "multitude" brought to glory through Him are to have this Name eternally "written on them." Only one other Name could be that of the One giving the Name "The Beloved" to His Son, and that supremely, eternally great Name is "Love." God is Love. This was the Name that Jesus "manifested" on earth; it was the Name in which He came. It was because His Name is "Love" that He sent His Son into the world to manifest that which His Name is. Unlike the "new Name" of the Son that of the Father's is as old as eternity, even though its first living "manifestation" on Earth was delayed for the "last days." In the regard of the "beginning" of human history and the Divine expression of character there are these references in 1st John 2:7, 1st John 3:11, and which read thus:

"Brethren, I write no New Commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that ye should love one another." Two beautiful definitions of the eternal Name of the Father are these in 1st John 4:8-16: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." God has all power and wisdom; His Name is "Love."

How glorious is the significance of Rev. 14:1 by the aid of this tracing! "And His Father's Name written on their foreheads." Deep, true conceptions of that "Name" with all the numbered ones is the matter indicated. The fact of these being the only ones of living mankind with this "Name written on their foreheads" testifies to the unchanged state of the world from that of the times of Christ, as in His prayer in John 17:25: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." It is only a dream of the

"night" to speak of the world knowing and loving God. In His estimate only the numbered ones of Rev. 14:1-3 love Him and fully, delightedly understand His glorious purpose as embodying that which His Name is. So altogether exceptional is this matter of understanding with the last of Christ's people as to distinguish them even in the regard of all previous generations of His people, and not only with living mankind. In a contemporary reference with Rev. 14:1, and concerning the whole community of Christ's people of the Gospel age, there is not any mention of the Names of the Son and the Father in their foreheads, but of that which is absent from them.

In Rev. 20:4, and in the associations of the sitting of all these on the thrones of Christ's kingdom, there are these matters: "Which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." There is thus imperative need for the matter of Rev. 14:1, and with the last section of the composite company, to reveal that which is on their foreheads, and not only that which is not. The fact of all the others not thus "written on their foreheads" sharing the thrones testifies to the absence of opportunity of "understanding" the deep things revealed to the numbered ones, and not to any lack of desire with these greater numbers.

Every one of the "numbered ones" of Rev. 14:1 has clear and deep understanding of the matter of "**God is love.**" All these know His purpose and its all-embracing character. And this matter of understanding of the Divine love, presented in Rev. 14:1 as "written on their foreheads," varies greatly with that of other such references as Romans 5:6. Not only is the "Heart" referred to in this and not the "forehead," but the "love" mentioned in it is that imparted by the Father, and to all the justified ones. "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." This is not in any way parallel with the matter of Rev. 14:1, but in quite another department of truth. Every one of the company there referred to is a glad subject of the "shedding abroad in their hearts," distinct from the matter of the "writing in their foreheads." Those who have neither faith in nor understanding of the Divine purpose in creation and redemption are using empty

phrases in speaking of the "love of God." Those who believe and teach the dreadful theories of that "Purpose," miscalled "orthodox," are not only proving their unbelief in the "Name of the Father," but that they have another "mark" on their "foreheads" to that of His writing.

It is by this presentation of the "standing" of the numbered ones in Rev. 14:1 that the results of the "open door" and of the preached "Word of His patience" for the era to His shout can be fully displayed. And the revealing in verse 1 of the presence with the Lamb on the Mount Sion, of the particular community of numbered ones, makes necessary the mention in verse 2 of other associations in Heaven at the era of this. The whole community of Christ's people, and not only the ones of verse 1, and their united praise, is the matter of verse 2: "And I heard a voice from Heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." This is additional to and distinct from the particular matter of verse 1, as also from that of verse 3, and where there is the tracing back from the standing with the Lamb of the numbered ones, to that which was responsible for it. "And they sung—as it were—a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth."

In this second mention of the exact numbers of the one company sharing "exceptional redemption" from the earth to the first of verse 1, there is the associating with the earth and contrast with all others on the earth. Only with this numbered company sharing the exceptional redemption, and not with any others of Christ's people of previous times, is there any comparison with all others on the earth. Neither in the first century, nor in any succeeding one to the era of Christ's sign, was there such a universal comparison instituted as the one of Rev. 14:3 and parallel Scriptures: "And no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth." This is exactly parallel with the matter of Rev. 3:10 and previously noticed, in presenting its own particular features and as marking the time when no further response

to the Divine offer of exceptional redemption is being made by mankind.

The "thou" addressed in Rev. 3:10 and commended comprise the 144,000 of Rev. 14:1-3, and the "Word of My patience" in the one reference is the same as "the new song" in the other. The "keeping from the hour of trial which shall come upon all the world," as in Rev. 3:10, is that of "were redeemed from the earth" recorded in Rev. 14:3-4. The two definitions of "Word of My patience," as in Rev. 3:10, and "new song," in Rev. 14:3, are in agreement in that the first refers to the "due truth" provided by Christ, and the second that of the delighted confession of it by each one believing and understanding it. The use of the words in Rev. 14:3, "And they sung, as it were, a new song," become manifest in meaning, when it is recognised that "new song" is employed of previous confessions of the people of God in all dispensations, and of their joyous faith in the Divine Word given them. The matter of Psalm 34:1 is of a class that abounds in the Psalms, with like ones in both Old and New Testaments.

"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." And the beautiful words of Hebrews 13:15 are written for every generation of the Gospel age and not any one in particular: "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of the lips giving thanks to His name." And this daily unceasing praise in all past times, as in the present era, is the result of His revealed truth in "good and honest hearts" and the gracious leading and comfort of His Spirit. As previously noted, "the Word of My patience," as in Rev. 3:10, is distinguished from the "My Word" referred to in verse 8 and of the times preceding the "open door," and so became a "new song" even by comparison with that Word. And assuredly not any "due truth" given to previous portions of the age can compare in fulness with "the Word of His patience," as forecasted in Daniel 12:10, and as appreciated fully by every delighted confessor of "the new song."

Since "the Word of My patience," as in Rev. 3:10, and the "new song" are identically the same (Rev. 14:3), it is manifest that the confessing "before the throne" has application right through the era to Christ's shout and

ecoming. Everything on earth is manifest before that throne All prayers, praise, and daily service of His true people, as well as the "could not learn that song" by all others of living mankind, are alike "before the throne." But it is in the regard of the "new song" sung by these last of Christ's people, being the only one of its kind ever ascending from worshippers on the earth, that there is the associating with "before the throne—before the four living creatures, and the elders." The use of "beasts" in regard to these four in Rev. 14:3, and in other references, is on account of the appearances of these seen by John bearing resemblance to different animals, as in Rev. 4:7.

"The first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face like a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle." In verse 6 there is the presentation of these "beasts" as being "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, full of eyes before and behind." These same "four" are the ones of the visions in Ezekiel, 1st chapter, and there referred to as "the living creatures." In Ezekiel 10th chapter these same ones are referred to as "the cherubim" several times, and which serve to explain what the appearance of the "cherubim" at the entrance to the Garden of Eden resembled, as in Genesis 3:24. In Isaiah 6:2-6, these same "living creatures, cherubim," are presented as "the seraphim."

These several Divine narrations of this profound matter have the different regards of at rest and in activity. In Rev. 14:3, as in Rev. 4:6-9, the "living creatures" are presented as "at rest" in the regard of being only attendants on "the throne," and not in active manifestation on earth as obtains in the record of Ezekiel 1st and 10th chapters. But even in the "at rest," in the connection of non-manifestation on earth in particular operations, there are the ceaseless activities with these recorded in Rev. 4:8: "And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Moreover, it only requires recognition of the Divine manifestation at the entrance to the Garden of Eden, being like the ones in Ezekiel and the Apocalypse, to understand how the perversion of that arose in later times in idolatrous worship associated with animals.

The distinguishing of the "angels" from these "four living creatures," in such marked connections as Rev. 5:8-10, further manifests that "Cherubim and Seraphim"—as in Isaiah and Ezekiel—were not Angelic beings. And the associating of "omniscience"—full of eyes—with these further testifies to their being the expression of the One, Who sees past, present and future, for, as in Hebrews 4:15, "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do." And the like activities on earth recorded of the "Cherubim"—of their "running and returning," as in Ezekiel 1:14—is the theme also of 2nd Chron. 16:9, and concerning the same "eyes" as in Rev. 4: 6-8. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." Here is full demonstration of the truth that the "four living creatures, Cherubim, Seraphim," are the presentations in powerful symbols of **Divine Providence**.

The fourfold expression of His "Providence" is that of the operation also of His attributes of Justice, Power, Mercy, Wisdom, all based on His character and Name of "**Love**." The "face like a lion"—of the Living Creatures—has the significance of the majestic strength of Divine Providence. The "face like a calf—ox," that of His patient, "long-suffering" methods. The "face like a man" suggests that which God made Man and which He will yet realise in him as a race, in its comparison with the attribute of "Justice"—moral integrity. Only a rational creature could provide illustration of the truth of Psalm 89:14: "Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy Throne." The "face like an eagle" brings again the comparison of "seeing"; in the added feature in Rev 4:7 of "flying eagle," and of the "Wisdom" of Divine Providence. "Seeing afar off" like the eagle is a comparison with the wisdom of Christ's people. Seeing "like a 'flying eagle'" is the one of Divine Providence in Rev. 4:7.

Understanding of the "four living creatures," as in Rev. 14:3, assists to the same in regard to the others mentioned as "The Elders" in this, as in several references in the Apocalypse. The use of "The Elders" in Hebrews 11:2 and to the faithful people of God of the dispensation

from Abel to John Baptist, also bears testimony to the different ones referred to in the associations of the "Throne and the living creatures." It was through "The Elders" referred to in the Apocalypse that "The Elders" spoken of in Hebrews 11:2 became approved, "obtained a good report." Thus the spoken Word of God through "Moses and the Prophets" is the matter of the personified "Elders," as "Divine Providence" is the one of the personified "four living creatures." In Rev. 4:4 there is this presentation of the different association with "the Throne" of the Elders to that of the "four living creatures" in verses 6-8.

"And round about the Throne were four and twenty seats (thrones), and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty Elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had crowns on their heads." The necessity for just twelve tribes of Israel, for just "twelve Apostles of the Lamb," are matters best known to Him Who thus appointed both, even though some true conceptions are obtainable with diligent students of the Divine Word. Exactly the same obtains in regard to the reference to "twenty-four Elders." There is not any direct connection between the "twenty-four Elders," as in Rev. 4:3, and the twenty-four orders of the sons of Aaron arranged for the Divine service by King David, as in 1st Chron., 24th chapter. But the Divine requirement of the first was responsible for its instituting. And the like Divine estimate of His prophetic Word spoken to the human "Elders," down to His speaking to the Last Days by His Son, is expressed in "twenty-four elders" seated on as many thrones around His own Throne.

Each Prophecy gone forth from the mouth of the Lord becomes an entity in itself, majestic and righteous in character. And each when fulfilled is victorious and exalted in power and glory. This is the matter of Rev. 4:4—the thrones around the one Throne, the white robes of each "Elder," and the crowns of gold on their heads. The scene of which this is part is that of the "Lamb's opening the closed and sealed Book" after His being "slain," and prevailing by His sacrifice. Just as "the Elders" represented the previous Word of God to that to be opened by the Lamb, so the "seven sealed book" represented the Divine Word to "the Last Days." It was during the course

of the dispensation to Christ's coming in flesh that God spake to the Fathers in the Prophets. But it was the commencement of the "Last Days" that God spake by His Son, and exalted Him to the right hand of power for the administering of that Word.

The praise and adoration of "the Elders and four living creatures" at the exaltation of the "Lamb," as in Rev. 5: 7, 8, beautifully agrees with such summaries as that of 1st Peter 1:11 and of all prophecy—"Testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." It is for the age of Christ's presence in Heaven and to His glorious appearing that there is the "sitting on thrones of the Elders," and their several recorded "speaking" at different stages of the unfolding purpose on earth as the "seals" were opened. The Divine estimate of His Word spoken during previous times is manifested in the presence of these crowned "Elders." And the fact of that "Word" reaching to the times of the "Last the glorified Son, is marked both in the presence of the "Elders" and of their "speaking" again of the things they Days," and being parallel with the Word spoken through had prophesied.

The "speaking" in the association of "the Lamb's exaltation" recorded in Rev. 5:5 by "one of the Elders," and in particular terms differing with the later singing a new song by all the Elders and living creatures, is one evidence in this regard. "And one of the Elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." The prophecy spoken through Jacob on his death-bed and recorded in Genesis 49:9, 10, is the "Elder" of Rev. 5:5 speaking again at the first realisation of the prophecy. "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; He stooped down, He couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse Him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

Another "Elder" to the one of Rev. 5:5 is the "speaker" in the utterances recorded in Rev. 7:13-17, and in the associations of the entrance of the white-robed multitude

into the Divine home and Presence, referred to in verse 9. Close attention to the different matters of this "Elder's" speaking in verses 13-17, and comparison with the many beautiful prophecies through **Isaiah**, commencing with that of **Isaiah 1:18**, will bring recognition of the speaker. "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," has connection with the "washing of the robes" in Rev. 7:14; as "the Lamb brought to the slaughter"—in **Isaiah 53:7**—has with "the blood of the Lamb" in Rev. 7:14: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

And it is in agreement with all the prophecies telling of the coming of the Divine Kingdom on earth, that not anyone but all the "Elders" are the ones referred to in Rev. 11: 15-18, at the era which marks the impending setting up of the Kingdom: "And the four and twenty Elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee thy great power and didst reign."

The last mention of "the Elders" in the Apocalypse bears further witness to their significance, and to their close connection with the other "Elders" responsible for the beautiful materials of **Hebrews 11th chapter**. It is at the stage of coming events, in the end of the "harvest" of the Gospel Age, when "the Elders" referred to in **Hebrews, 11th chapter**, enter celestial glory, that there is the final mention of the "twenty-four Elders," as also of the "four living creatures" in the Apocalypse. In Rev. 19:1 there is the forecasted resurrection of all the people of God of the dispensations to the first Advent. The "much people in Heaven" referred to in this verse are "the Elders" to the younger of Christ's people of the Gospel Age. All these "Elders" are to share resurrection in Heaven, at a stage of events nearly forty years later than the one of Christ's coming for His people to the air of the earth.

And it is in the associations of this entrance into celestial glory that there is recorded in Rev. 19:4 this final, and which is marked in the use of "**Amen**," and praise to **Jehovah**: "And the four and twenty Elders and the four

living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sat on the Throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia." This final the more discloses the close connection between the two kinds of "Elders" referred to in the Scriptures.

It is both interesting and important to note that the first recording of a "new song" in the Apocalypse, and the only one thus recorded save the one of Rev. 14:3, is that in Rev. 5:9, 10. As stated in verse 8, the ones singing this new song are the twenty-four Elders, and the four living creatures. And this "singing" is before the Lamb, as it is in adoration of Him.

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation: and hast made them unto our God kings and priests; and they shall reign on the earth." In the Revised, as in other modern Versions, there is properly the use of "them" and not of "us" in these verses, since others and not the ones offering the praise are the redeemed kings and priests. How very striking is this "new song" from such impersonal singers!

The Divine Word personified in "the Elders" and Divine Providence personified in the "four living creatures" had both—in previous ages—been operating on behalf of the human "Elders." But during the same times there had been in every prophecy the pointing ahead to the coming One and the "great salvation" which He would provide for His people. In Acts 10:43 there is the like feature in the regard of the coming Saviour: "To Him give all the Prophets witness." And in 1st Peter 1:10-12 there are the same two features as in the "new song" in Rev. 5:8-10: "Of which salvation the Prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, did they minister the things which are now reported unto you."

How very beautiful is the matter of the "new song" sung by the personified ones in Rev. 5:8-10, and in regard

to the Saviour and His "great salvation" provided for His people. This was, indeed, a "new song" to that of the salvation provided for all "the Elders" of God's people of previous times. But in this mention of "new song," and although referring to the "great salvation," the ones singing it are the twenty-four Elders and four living creatures, and not the ones referred to in it as the "them made kings and priests." And there is not any later reference in the Apocalypse, nor elsewhere, employing "new song" in the regard of the subjects of the "great salvation" and their confession of faith. Neither is there the use of "new song" in the connection of the meeting with the Lamb of all His people, and their adoring praise of Him and of the Father. Not anything could be more marked than the methods employed in avoiding all causes for confusion in regard to the "new song," referred to in Rev. 14:3, and the universal connection in the words, "And no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

Section Six.

This tracing both of the significance of "twenty-four Elders, four living creatures," and their "singing a new song," the more isolates and emphasises the matter of Rev. 14:3: "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders." This powerfully intimates that never previously had such a "song" ascended from the earth, during all the times comprehended in "the throne, the four living creatures and the Elders." The universal connection in the second clause of the verse agrees with the matter of verse 1 in locating the era intended as just preceding the redemption from the earth of the numbered singers: "And no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." Not until this result has been made universally manifest is there the recording of this sad and amazing fact, and that further delay is unnecessary.

The only hindrance to "learning that song" is within every "man" not learning it. The recorded numbers confessing "that song" are those who "could learn it." Any operation of Divine "foreknowledge"—in this regard, like

as in the "days of Noah," expresses the righteous ability of "knowing what is in man," and not anything arbitrary. Exactly the same obtained in Christ's forecast of the proportions in every generation of the age, down to the one of Rev. 14:3, but apart from revealing any actual numbers such as obtains with the last generation. In Matt. 7:13, 14 there are these age-lasting comparisons in the forecast: "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therewith. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The numbers of these "few" in all generations down to the one of Rev. 14:3 are not mentioned.

And although the "many and few" of this forecast have universal connections in the regard of the "great salvation," these will only be made manifest in coming times. When the totality of the "few" of all generations are gathered to Christ at His coming, and the larger numbers referred to as the "many" are left for a later gathering by Him, the great contrast between the two, both in numbers and glory, will then be disclosed. This is one of the several matters in the forecast in Malachi 3:18, and which involves different "glories" of the two communities referred to: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not."

The only exception to this order of delayed making manifest of the respective communities is that forecasted in Rev. 14:3 and connected Scriptures and of the living generation. This "making manifest" to living mankind of the 144,000 singers of the "new song" is considered in the succeeding chapter of this work. But the fact of this revealed totality of the living generation being exceptional is in agreement with the "exceptional" era and its offer of "exceptional redemption." And our previous tracings in Rev. 3:8-10 have recognised the like universal domain of comparisons and contrasts in its forecasts, as in the one of Rev. 14:3, but apart from mentioning the numbers of "Philadelphians." The "world, them that dwell upon the earth," as in Rev. 3:10, are the same as are embraced in

the words in Rev. 14:3: "And no man could learn that song."

And just as the "redemption from the earth" referred to in the same verse is the one of Christ's forecast and promise in Luke 21:28, so the universal comparison in the matter of the "new song" has the further one in Like 21:34, 35 in the regard of Christ's coming. The "ye, you" of verses 28-34 are the same ones as the numbered community in Rev. 14:1, 3, and the "all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth," to whom the coming of Christ will be as a "snare"—as in verse 35—are the same as "No man could learn that song."

The comparison previously noted between "Philadelphians and the Synagogue of Satan" in Rev. 3:9 explains the added comparison in Rev. 14:5 to the one in verse 4: "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins." In harmony with other references to "women" in the Apocalypse, this one has application to religious sects. The large numbers of these comprised in "The Synagogue of Satan" at the era marked agrees with the use of the plural "women" in Rev. 14:5. Whatever differences there are amongst these "women," they are not only all alike in the one regard, but in that "one" are like the "man"—universal man—which "could not learn that song." Nothing else is of any moment or of importance such as degrees of error amongst the "women."

"For they are virgins" has also the suggestion of false claims to being "virgins" amongst the "women" referred to, and which is also the matter of Christ's parable in Matt. 25:1-12, and its use of "foolish virgins" to one of the "women" referred to in Rev. 14:5. As previously considered, the matter of the virginity of the numbered ones is that of their "guileless mouth," as in verse 5: "And in their mouth was found no guile"—falsehood, error. It is in the like regard that there are the added words in the same verse: "For they are without fault"—flawless—in the one regard of their confessed faith. In other matters not mentioned these "virgins" daily share in the provision of the Gospel which they all love, defined in Acts 13:39: "And by Him (Christ) all that believe are justified from all things."

"These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoe'er He goeth" is a further proof of the "these" being "virgins," and of their not being "defiled with women." These are the only ones on earth during the era then ending that have "followed the Lamb" in their singing the "new song"—or, as in Rev. 3:10, "Keeping the Word of **My patience**." All professions of faith in the Lamb or of following Him are tested by willing anxiety to "learn the new song," by eager seeking to believe and keep the Word of His patience.

"These were redeemed from among men, the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb," is the further matter in Rev. 14:5, and which is a second and different definition of "exceptional redemption" to the first in verse 4 of "redeemed from the earth." And it is in the second one—"From among men," and not in the first, "From the earth"—that there is the use of "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." As revealed in 1st Corinthians 15:40, 41, there are two glories of "the celestial" compared with the different effulgence of the sun and moon, and the one glory of "the terrestrial" is as diversified as that of the stars. All the "Elders" are to share "celestial inheritance" comparable to the effulgence of the moon, and all Christ's people that illustrated by the glory of the sun. Both these communities gathered out of the world during past and present dispensations are "redeemed from the earth." Heaven is their eternal home.

The numbered ones of Rev. 14:1-5 are the last of Christ's people, as they are the last prepared for the "celestial glory." The "terrestrial glory" is the one to be bestowed upon all others of the redeemed creation, by and through the Kingdom of Christ during the two ages of its administration. Of all partaking of "celestial glory," the community of Rev. 14:1-5 are the only ones "redeemed from the earth" apart from death, or "falling asleep." But the Divine purpose of the coming age has appointed and revealed that vast numbers are to enter eternal life at its ending apart from death. And it is in regard to these that there is the use of "firstfruits from among men," in Rev. 14:4, and to the hundred forty and four thousand of the last of Christ's people.

Although the section in Rev. 14:1-5 is so fruitful in its unfoldings, there is not any explanation in it as to what is comprised in the "new song," the learning and confessing of which prepares for "exceptional redemption." And in this there is likeness with the "message to the angel and Church in Philadelphia" in Rev. 3:8-10, and its presenting the "Word of His patience" apart from any disclosing of what that Word, consists of. The methods of the Inspired Word are such as to effectively "hide the truth" from the mere curious and slothful, and to reveal it in its wondrous fulness and harmony, to those hungering and thirsting for its provision, the true "children of God."

A particular section is devoted in Rev. 15:2-4 to the full exposition of the "new song" of Rev. 14:3, and of "the Word of My patience," as in Rev. 3:10, since both these refer to the one matter. In verse 3 there is the designation of "the Song of Moses the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb," of these same, and as being sung by victors standing on a "sea of glass mingled with fire." These "singers and victors" are also said to have "the harps of God." The associations in this section are manifestly earthly ones throughout, and in this vary with the commencing matter of the section in Rev. 14:1, treating on the "standing on the Mount Sion with the Lamb," but are parallel with the matters of verses 3-5. The era from Christ's sign to His shout is the one of Rev. 15:2-4, and apart from any marked terminus. And in this seeming unfinished section there is the supplying of that omitted from the comprehensive forecasts in the respective sections in Rev. 3:8-10, Rev. 14:1-5.

And not only is the section in Rev. 15:2-4 the completion to the two others quoted, but its associations are only intelligible as there is understanding of still other sections of the Apocalypse. The matters of verse 2 are as follows: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." The use of "as it were a sea of glass," in the first clause, was on account of the previous seeing by John and in "Heaven," the Throne and its One Occupant, the Lamb, the twenty-four Elders, the

four living creatures, the many angels, and, as in Rev. 4:6, "Before the throne a sea of glass like unto crystal." This "sea before the throne" was not only of "glass" like the later one of Rev. 15:2, but of the "crystal" kind of glass not specified with the other, and apart from any "mingling with fire" such as is stated of the other.

Moreover, the "sea of glass like unto crystal, before the throne," is not associated with any provision of a standing place for victors, but as a necessary part of the heavenly arrangements shown to John's sight. But the manifestly sole purpose of "the sea of glass mingled with fire," as in Rev. 15:2, is that of providing a new standing place for the new "victors" on earth. The matter of verse 1 provides further evidence of the particular time intended in the appearing of the "sea of glass," and reads thus: "And I saw another sign in Heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." In this there is not any explanation of what these "seven last plagues" consist of. There is necessity for avoiding any confounding of the "seven last plagues" with the "seven vials of the wrath of God," fully described in their outpouring in Rev. 16 chapter.

In the order of events the two matters of Rev. 15:1-4 are at an advanced stage of the events recorded in Rev. 16th chapter. The pouring out of the "vials of wrath" commenced at the sounding of the "seventh trumpet" in the French Revolution era of the end of the 18th century and opening of the 19th. This also marked "the time of the end" referred to in such Scriptures as Daniel 12:9, 10. As clearly marked in Rev. 16: 12-16, Christ's personal coming is at an advanced stage of the "sixth vial." And the pouring out of the "seventh vial" is at the end of the succeeding "harvest," some forty years after His personal coming. The events succeeding His personal coming for His people, and parallel with the "Flood" on the adult population of the earth, are all comprised in the pregnant definition in Rev. 16:14: "The war of that great day of God Almighty." It is during this "war" of some ten years' duration that there is the infliction of the "seven last plagues" on the living adult world, referred to in Rev. 15:2.

It thus becomes very clear that the time indicated in Rev. 15:1-4, and when John saw the two distinct matters, is that just preceding Christ's shout. Not until all on earth have manifested their attitude to the offer of "exceptional redemption," not until all the proved "victors" are fully tested, and not any others possible from mankind, was there the need for the presenting of the matter of Rev. 15:1: "And I saw another sign in Heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." The "filling up" or completion in these "last plagues" is additional to that contained in the "seven vials." The two matters are contrasted and distinguished in Rev. 15:6,7: "And the seven angels came out of the Temple, having the seven plagues. . . . And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God."

The absence of mention in these references to the "seven last plagues" of their constituents avoids all causes for confounding them with the clearly-defined "seven vials." And other Scriptures in the Father's Word fully expound them, since the era of their infliction has such important connection with the different experiences of living Israel. Careful study of the section in Rev. 16:14-16 will bring recognition of the era between the ending of the sixth vial at Christ's coming, and the pouring out of the seventh vial, as the one during which there is the inflicting of the "seven last plagues."

"Exceptional redemption" required the presenting of the "sea of glass" as the standing of all proving "victors" during the era from Christ's sign to His coming. In 1st John 5:4 there is this definition of "victory" with all the people of Christ: "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith." And all such "victors" are included in the beautiful comparison in the last clause of Rev. 13:6: "Them that dwell in Heaven." This is the more marked in the contrast with all others recorded in verse 8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life." Together with several other references in the Apocalypse of the same class, there is the like definition of all outside His believing people, in Luke 21:35: "For as a snare shall it come on all them that

dwell on the face of the whole earth." "Dwellers in Heaven and dwellers on earth" were the differences—in the Divine estimate—between Christ's people and all others to the era of His sign.

In Ephesians 2:6 there is the like matter of the Heavenly dwelling by faith of all true believers for the course of their life of faith: "And raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the Heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The further matter in Colossians 3:1 the more emphasises the Heavenly dwelling of all in Christ, and the involved earthly dwelling of all others: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Christ's promise to the "ye" addressed in Luke 21:28-31, at the appearing of His sign and their seeing it, made necessary an alteration in the standing of these and of fellow-believers from that of "dwellers in Heaven" to the one of "stand on the sea of glass." Redemption from the earth, from among men, without need for "falling asleep" or of becoming the "dead in Christ" imperatively required an altered standing such as the one of Rev. 15:2—"A glassy sea mingled with fire." ("Glassy" is the correct term.)

A direct connection with this "sea," and which serves to explain its distinction both from the "sea" in Rev. 4:6 and that of Rev. 13:1, is presented in the matters in Rev. 11:1, 2: "And there was given unto me a reed like unto a rod; and one said, Rise and measure the Temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the Temple leave out; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the Holy City shall they tread under foot forty and two months." In this beautiful series of signs, the Divine cause on earth for the Gospel Age is presented as comprising a Holy City, a Temple with its altar and an outer court. In this comparison, and which agrees with parallel references in the Epistles, Christ's true people are presented both as worshippers at the altar of an earthly temple, and as "citizens" of an existing "Holy City" on earth.

Moreover, together with these comparisons of the Divine cause on earth, and for the course of the Gospel Age, there are those which present the signs of a Heavenly

Temple where the Throne is located, and before which there is the "glassy sea like unto crystal," as in Rev. 4:6. "The Temple which is in Heaven," as distinguished from "the Temple" within the Holy City on earth for the Gospel Age, is referred to in the following references: Rev. 11:19, Rev. 17:14, Rev. 15:5, and in Rev. 16:17 and the end of the harvest there are these words: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, and there came a great voice out of the Temple of Heaven, from the Throne, saying, It is done."

Although the comparisons of Holy City, Temple, altar, outer court have obtained throughout the age with the Divine cause on earth, it is only at the appearing of Christ's sign and the beginning of the era to His coming that there is introduced the sign of Rev. 15:2: "And I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire." This is a comparison with the "laver" in the court of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, as with the "sea" in that of the Temple built by King Solomon. In regard to the "laver" there are these words in Exodus 30:18-21: "For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet thereat. When they go into the Tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not." This preserving from death of Aaron and his sons by washing at the "laver" had the then present purpose of hindering sudden destruction, and not of preserving to eternal life. But the presentation of the like furniment in the "glassy sea" in Rev. 15:2—as the standing place of the singing "victors" there mentioned—has the significance of "exceptional redemption" from the earth and from among men, and not only of preserving from death.

In 1st Kings 7:23-25, and the account of the furnishings of the Temple erected by King Solomon, there is this mention of the dimensions of the much greater "laver" to that of the Tabernacle in the wilderness: "And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other; it was round all about, and its height was five cubits." The fact of the "glassy sea" being associated with the "Temple" referred to in Rev. 11:1 explains the use of "sea" rather than that of "laver" in Rev. 15:2. But the likeness in its substance with that in the signs of the Heavenly "sea of glass like unto crystal," as in Rev. 4:6, rather than with

the water of the "sea" of Solomon's Temple, further testifies to its bearing on Heavenly things and eternal life. And instead of providing "cleansing" to those standing on it, it is because of the victory of all these over "the beast and his image and over the number of his name" that "glassy" is employed of it and as reflecting the purity of those upon it.

But unlike its great pattern before the Throne in the Heavenly Temple, there is the "mingling" with its glassy substance of "fire." Obtaining a standing on this "sea" by victory over the two forces in the world without does not mark the end of trials and testings, even though these are felt less and less as there is continued "growth" in the glorious things believed. The matters previously considered in the "message to the angel and Church in Philadelphia," the appeal to "hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown," are exactly parallel with the "fires on the glassy sea." The day of Christ's shout marks the terminus to all the testings "as by fire."

It is to be noted here that with the translation of the victors on the glassy sea from the "temple on earth" to the Heavenly Temple not any further entrance into the "earthly temple" is possible or permitted until the infliction of the "seven last plagues." This is the matter of Rev. 15:8 and in application to the Divine cause on earth—earthly temple—as distinguished from the "temple of the Tabernacle of the testimony in Heaven," as in verse 5. This is the matter of verse 8: "And the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the Temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." The stage when this "Temple" is again opened for worshippers on earth is that marked in Zech. 14th chapter, and the deliverance of Jerusalem by the appearing of the Lord with all His saints. This also marks the beginning of the "harvest" and the inviting of all that generation to become worshippers in the then opened "Temple," as forecasted in Rev. 14:6, 7. The "dwellers on earth—every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"—addressed in this preaching of the "everlasting Gospel," are the minors of this living generation then grown up. To these there is the appeal in the "loud voice," Fear God and

give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship **Him** that made Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

It is then that there commences realisation of Christ's forecast and comparison with "the days of Noah" recorded in Luke 17:26, 27, but which is outside of the scope of this work: "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark, and the Flood came, and destroyed them all." This second comparison with "the days of Noah" (to the first of Matt. 24:37-39), and with the "harvest" generation, the more discloses the wonderful "object lesson" comprised in them. But with this "second comparison" there is necessity to associate "the days of Lot," on account of the destruction in the end of the "harvest" of all the wicked being brought by fire from Heaven. Thus there is the addition in Luke 17: 28-30 to the comparison with "the days of Noah" in verses 26, 27: "**Likewise** also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all. **Even thus** shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."

And now we return to the consideration of the second matter in Rev. 15:2 to the first of the "glassy sea" as the standing of the singing victors: "And I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand on the glassy sea, having the harps of God." In the "Author Version" there is the addition to these three of "and over his mark," but which is not in the "Original Scriptures" nor in the "Revised" and other Versions.

It is clear to sober thought that the two—"the beast and his image"—in this verse refer to the same two mentioned in the "message to Philadelphia" in Rev. 3:9, 10 as "the Synagogue of Satan and the world." And the same two are the ones in the contrasts in Rev. 14:3, 4—"no man" and the "women." The dividing of the "world"

outside of the little community of Christ's true people into two sections distinguishes between religious and irreligious. And this "dividing" and the use of the terms "the beast and his image" obtains in the Scriptures in the regard of every portion of the Gospel Age. The use of the term "beast—beasts" in the Apocalypse, as in the Book of Daniel, is to human kingdoms governed by the "spirit of the world." And the use of "image of the beast" is to religious organisations governed by the same spirit.

The "world" as delineated in the Scriptures has dual significance. It is used of the order of human life and society, and of the natural state in all mankind of "enmity to God." The "world" of mankind as the creatures of God is the one that God so loved as to send His Son for its redemption. But the "World" as relating to and defining the state of enmity in mankind to God and His service is the one of mention in many Scriptures in the like regard as in James 4:4: "The friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." In John 17:6, 15, Christ refers to His followers as being given Him "out of the world" in the one regard, and in another He said to the Father: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Being in the world but not of the world, being constituents of the human race but not partakers of the natural state of "enmity" in mankind, marks different "worlds."

That which is referred to in Romans 8:5-8 has the like meaning as the different "worlds." Being in "the flesh" or not "in the flesh but in the Spirit" relates to the different states of mind thus defined in verses 6, 7: "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God." This, in turn, manifests that the many references to "overcoming" have application to the "carnal mind," and the obtaining of a "spiritual mind." And this change of mind is the matter of "overcoming the world" referred to in such Scriptures as 1st John 5:4.

But and although "world and beast" have like significance in the regard of the spirit of "enmity to God," there is a particular connection with "overcoming the beast"

beyond that of "overcoming the world." This is made more manifest from the fact that only of the "victors on the glassy sea" and not of any others of Christ's people of the Gospel Age is it written, as in Rev. 15:2: "Them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name." All generations of Christ's people are "overcomers of the world," spiritually minded, not of the world, but only the one section of these, the living ones at Christ's coming, are "overcomers of the beast and his image." (The matter of "the number of his name" will be noted later.)

And this difference is even more marked in other comparisons. From these it becomes manifest that in the days of the Apostles or the first century of the Christian Era, as in every later one, the then living "world" of mankind was divided—in the Divine estimate—into the two divisions of "the beast and his image." These two in the first century varied with the "beast and his image" of each succeeding portion of the age, as "the beast and his image" referred to in Rev. 15:2 and the era to Christ's shout, varies with all preceding ones. It is in the regard of the "beast and his image" of the days of the Apostles that there is the distinguishing in Ephesians 6:12 between mankind as "flesh and blood creatures of God," and the things believed and taught by them. These are the powerful words of the Apostle: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual things of wickedness in heavenly places."

A fact of history of the "Dark Ages," and which agrees with the revealed methods of reserving for "the time of the end" the full unfolding of the Divine purpose of creation and redemption, has bearing on the different kinds of "overcoming"—of the world, and of the beast and his image. Many of the false teachings of "the beast and his image" were held by Christ's people, even though all these were "the saints and witnesses of Jesus" and overcomers of the world. Their times did not permit of "overcoming the beast and his image" in all that their teachings and beliefs comprised. This matter with others, the more impresses the mind with the careful wording of the Divine

Word, in its inclusion of all the people of Christ in the one connection recorded in such Scriptures as that in Rev. 20:4: "And I saw Thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them . . . which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands."

There is the careful avoiding in this of any mention such as that in Rev. 15:2, and of one section of these, of "overcoming the beast and his image" and the recording of "not worshipping" with all the occupants of the coming Thrones. But there is in this also the clear indication of the presence of the "beast and his image" in every generation of the Gospel Age, and which involves different ones in each. And the mention of "not worshipped" the more emphasises the "overcoming" in the isolated matter in Rev. 15:2, and with the one section.

As declared in Romans 5:12: "By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." This "world" at the time of the first sin compared two persons. The first human pair of sinners were "the foundation of the world" referred to in such references as Luke 11:50, as distinguished from the many other Scriptures making mention of the "foundations of the earth." Adam and Eve were one flesh, as they were the parents of a sinful "world." From its commencement the "world" was named by God by the name of "wicked" in contrast with His own Name of "Love." In its time of application the reference in 1st John 3:12 to the name of the world is the first use of it. "Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slew his brother." This name of the world—"wicked"—is employed some 250 times in the Divine Word, with individual and collective application.

And this same name of the world and of every individual in it is also the name of every "beast"—human kingdom—with additions to particular beasts, such as the one in Rev. 13: 1, 2, 17, 18. The revived Roman Empire from the 6th century to its decease in the opening years of the 19th century is the one in its various phases of this chapter. And throughout its terrible course of "forty-two months"—1260 years—it was not only Papal in its headship, but "Latin" in everything connected with it, and not only its

language. "The Latin world, Latin Kingdom, the Latin Church, the Latin clergy, the Latin Councils" are terms used of it in history from its uprising and with the authority of its Head. As in Dr. More's historical work, "The Pope communicated his language to the people under his dominion, as the mark and character of his empire." And this was the more arresting since "Latin" was the language of Pagan Rome, and decayed at the uprising and spread of Christianity, being supplanted by the Greek tongue.

"Latin" was revived and made the religious tongue in the 7th century by Pope Vitalian, and fully established throughout the Empire in the 9th century, through the co-operation of Charlemagne the Great, the joint ruler with the Pope. Only in the centuries from the first to the sixth of the Christian era was there the mark of exceptional "wisdom" in being able—as in Rev. 13:18—"to count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six." Since the uprising of this "Latin" Empire, and for its course, and particularly since its decease as an empire, this "counting its number" has been made comparatively easy by its own indelible marks and the facts of its history. A certain mark of "darkness" of mind is that of looking to the future for the "beast" delineated in Rev. 13th chapter, and speculating as to what is meant by its "number" in verse 18. Only of this "beast" is there the need for and fact of according any "number" as a means of its full recognition. Not any of the "beast" kingdoms of past history nor of the large numbers on earth at the present era have any "number." Only the one needed to be numbered.

In Daniel 7:7, 19-23 the "fourth beast" is the term used of the Empire revived in the "beast" of Rev. 13:1, 2 after its decease in the fifth century. But unlike the deceased Empire, the revived one was a "sacerdotal" one "headed up" in the one man order of supreme authority. This one man feature is an important one of the "number of the beast—the number of a man." Unlike the English alphabet and that of other peoples, each letter of the Greek alphabet has its numerical value, so that the name of every person or thing when its letters are added up presents a sum total. It is this adding up which is intended in Rev.

13:18: "Count the number of the beast." Even if it was possible to find any other name totalling up 666 as well as the one of "Lateinos"—Latin Kingdom—such would not interfere one iota with the fact of "Lateinos" being the one intended. "The Latin Kingdom" headed up in a man is the number of the beast.

It is to be noted here that the matters of Rev. 13:17 are quite distinct from the "number of the beast" in verse 18, and are apart from any "counting" as to their significance: "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." This verse, with preceding ones, is treating on the terrible times of the dominion of this numbered beast, and, as in verse 7, when "power was given him over all kinds and tongues and nations" to enforce the worship referred to in verse 8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him." The consideration of what is meant by "the name of the beast, or the number of his name," as quite distinct from the "number of the beast," will be presented after the further distinct matter of "the name of blasphemy," as in Rev. 13:1.

Only at the uprising of this revived beast and not on the seven heads of the "Fourth Empire," is there the associating with the seven-hilled City of Rome, the matter of "And upon his heads the name of blasphemy." This is an addition to the "name of the beast"—"wicked"—only added to this one beast. All other "beasts" have the one name of "wicked"; this one has the two names. In 2nd Thess. 2:3, 4, 8 the two names of this one beast are recorded, that of its name shared with all others, and that of the added "name of blasphemy." In the use of the former in verse 8 there is the use of "that wicked" as marking exceptional the one intended: "And then shall that wicked be revealed." And in verses 3, 4 and the revelation of the "name of blasphemy" there is the like distinguishing from all others: "And that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called Divinity, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God." The name and character of this one man is presented in these verses.

It was when this "man" became the head of the revived Empire, as well as the head of a universal "religious organisation referred to as "the woman" in Rev. 17:18, that there was "the name of blasphemy" seated on the seven heads, as in Rev. 13:1, 2. Just as the Divine naming of the world and all "beasts" within it is that of "wicked," so the naming of this "one man" order is that of "the man of sin." The use of "Antichrist" to the same "man" in 1st John 4:3 is not that of another name, but of a further definition of character to the one referred to by Paul in 2nd Thess. 2:4, and indicated in John's words: "This is the spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world." And just as God and Christ are what their names are—"Love, the Beloved"—so with the name of "the man of sin." The name stands for the person; the exceptional iniquity of the "one man" above all others of the "wicked" makes necessary the added name.

This "him" of frequent mention in Rev. 13th chapter, and for the times there outlined, is "the name of blasphemy—the man of sin." The compulsory receiving of his "mark" during the appointed 1260 years by "all that dwell upon the earth," referred to in Rev. 13:16, was that of acceptance of his claimed Divine standing and doctrine. Only such "marked ones" were allowed the liberties of human society, or regarded as fitted to live, "and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark of the beast." All those during the times of the compulsory "marking" who refused to receive it, proved themselves the ones referred to in verses 7, 10: "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints. . . . Here is the patience and faith of the saints."

The removal of power to enforce his "mark" upon the "all that dwell upon the earth" at the decease of the "Holy Roman Empire" with the coming of the "time of the end," is responsible for the omission of "And his mark" in Rev. 15:2. Only the beast, and his image, and the number of his name, and not his "mark," are recorded as being overcome by the victors on the glassy sea. From the commencement of the "time of the end" the enforcing of his "mark" ceased. And the religious organisation of which "the man of sin" is

the head—"the woman"—was included with the many others referred to as "women" in the Church of the Laodiceans." But in this change from the order of the previous 1260 years power of "the man of sin," the injurious influences of "the woman" are referred to in Rev. 17:2 and of the present era: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." The "marking" by the man ceased, but making drunk by the wine of the woman's evil spirit obtains universally—save with the "victors."

Not any such beast and his image as the ones referred to in Rev. 13th chapter have been on earth during the era of the "glassy sea," as in Rev. 15:2, and overcome by the victors there said to be standing on that sea. The application of "beast" in Rev. 15:2 is the same as "world" in the "Message to the Philadelphians" in Rev. 3:10. And the significance of "his image" in Rev. 15:2 is the same as "the Synagogue of Satan" in Rev. 3:9, and the "women" in Rev. 14:4. But "the number of his name" referred to in Rev. 15:2 is the same as in Rev. 13:17 and of the times of the power of "the man of sin." All the saints of the 1260 years, like the victors on the glassy sea, overcame the "number of his name."

There is not any overcoming of the "number of the beast," but rather the counting of that number by the ones with wisdom. This serves to make manifest the very great difference between the "number of the beast and the number of his name." Moreover, the "name" referred to in Rev. 15:2 (and over the number of his name), as in Rev. 13:17, is not the "name of blasphemy" the added one to the general name of the beast and the world. There is not any number of the "name of blasphemy" referred to in Rev. 13:1, and the only ones that could in any way overcome that name were the ones comprised in it, and this by ceasing to be constituents of it. Only the "man of sin" can overcome his own name. But, and as declared in Rev. 15:2, every victor on the glassy sea has "gotten the victory over the **number of his name**," as well as the victory over the "**beast and over his image**"—a threefold victory.

Getting the victory over the "beast and over his image," as in Rev. 15:2, is in the things of faith, the things believed, and which are contrary to those held by all mankind influenced by the two orders of the "beast and his image." By remembering our previous consideration of the like universal responsibility to Christ's sign and Word of the living world, with that of the world of Noah's days to the Divine Word and the witness of the Ark, the "beast and his image," as in Rev. 15:2, becomes more manifest. Opposition to the "due truth" and its signs of all outside of the "Church in Philadelphia" is of the two kinds from the one world, and making necessary the use of "the beast and his image."

But the third matter of victory recorded in Rev. 15:2 "over the number of his name" presents a result within each victor from the two other victories. The use of "his name" indicates that it is the one of the beast and of his image. Both have the same name of "wicked," and it is this name and not the "name of blasphemy" that is numbered. And the overcoming of this name and of its number was accomplished by all the saints of the Gospel Age, as well as by the victors on the glassy sea, in their overcoming of the world.

There is need for distinguishing the truth of the Divine Word and the spirit of that truth, marked in such references as Ephes. 6:17: "And the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God." The Spirit and the Word are distinct; the latter is the "sword" of the former. So in the beautiful words in John 16:13, and of Christ's promise to His followers: 'Howbeit when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.' Again and again there is reference in the Inspired Word to the new "spirit" which is imparted to each believer of the Divine Word, as additional to the understanding of the truth itself. In 2nd Timothy 1:7, and together with the mention of the gift of this new spirit, there is that of its threefold character; "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Although the obtaining of this "spirit of truth" is by the gracious gift of God like the obtaining of understanding of the truth of the Divine purpose from His Word, it

marks a "victory" with every recipient. In Matt. 11:25 the perfect control over His own written Word, in the hiding and revealing of its wondrous truths, is emphasised of the Father by Christ and made the cause of His thanks to the Father: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Only to such "babes" to whom the hidden truths of the Divine Word are made manifest is there the promise also of the "spirit of power, love and of a sound mind." And all these are victors in the obtaining of the dual gifts.

The one gift of understanding the full truth of "the new song" is indicated in Rev. 15:2 in the dual victory over the "beast and over his image." The other "gift" of the spirit of the truth is intended in the reference to the victory over "the number of his name." The name here referred to is "wicked." The number of this name is not a matter of "counting" as it is with that of the beast referred to in Rev. 13:18, although it is a sum total of character. The Names of the Father and of the Son perfectly express their respective characters, apart from any need for numbering them or any sum total distinct from their Names. But the name of "wicked" requires a number or summary to fully express its actuating spirit or disposition, and its number is "hate." This number is the opposite to the spirit and Name of the Father—"Love." From its commencement the spirit—number—of the world was that of "hating" the Father and His Word.

This estimate of the One Who knows finds expression in some 180 uses in His Word of the "number" of the name of the world—"hate, hating, hateful." There is ever the necessity for knowing His estimates to the avoiding of making wrong ones both of self and of others. There was urgent need for Christ's words in this regard in Luke 16:15, and which are of a class numerous in its constituents: "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." In His sight "hate" is the natural state of every heart, until and when the new spirit imparted by Him is received and expels the old one. In one of the many references to the "number" of the name "wicked," and referring to its universal operation in mankind, that of

Titus 3:3 includes Paul the writer with all others: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another."

Paul only learned of this "hateful, hating" state being the natural one of all mankind after being delivered from it. The same obtained with the other Apostles at the "Last Supper," and when told by Christ such matters as those recorded in John 15:18, 19, 23-25: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before you. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. But this cometh to pass, that the Word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, **They hated me without a cause.**" The revealed truth of Rev. 15:2, that the victors on the glassy sea have every one "overcome the **number of his name,**" testifies to the continued spirit of "hateful, hating" in all others comprised in "the beast and his image." This is only another evidence of the truth of Christ's comparison and forecast in Matt. 24: 37-39: "But as the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." The world has not improved in its spirit during nearly 5000 years' history. Only the victors over the beast and his image, and over "the number of his name," have ceased to "hate" and learned to "love."

The universal comparison and contrast in Rev. 15:2 is only another expression of the one in Rev. 3:10, and in Rev. 14:4. Those "keeping the Word of My patience," and the "world" not keeping it, those "learning the new song," and the "no man could learn that song," are the same in principle as the matter of the overcoming of "the beast and his image and the number of his name," by the victors on the glassy sea. And the one "name" of the "world" in the "days of Noah" is the same as "**his name**" in Rev. 15:2, and of the beast and his image—"wicked." And the overcoming of that "name" marks the victors as "wise," as the overcoming of the "number of his name" marks them as "loving." The name of "wise" given to all overcomers of the name of "wicked" occurs some hundreds of times in the Scriptures, together with that which makes them "wise"—the wisdom of God's Word. The last of the two kinds referred to in Daniel 12:10 and of the wonderful "time of the

end," are the two of Rev. 15:2—the victors on the glassy sea, and all others on earth comprised in the beast and his image: "And the **wicked** shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the **wise** shall understand."

Just as the "wickedness" referred to in Genesis 6:5, and at the commencement of the "era of respite," was intensified by the rejection of the Divine preaching and that of Noah, so with the world during the era of the "glassy sea" and to Christ's coming. All the "wicked" have indeed "**done wickedly**" in not overcoming the beast and his image; not overcoming the number of his name, and not standing on the wonderful "glassy sea." And it is by "**understanding**" that the victors **have** thus "**overcome**" and become the "**wise**," and through the means as in 2nd Timothy 3:15: "Thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make **wise unto salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus." All the victors of Rev. 15:2 were not only born "**in sin**" and in and of the "**world**" named wicked, but were also constituents of the "**beast and his image**" of the same name, until they sought for and obtained "**understanding**" and the spirit of love.

Here is the matter of the last clause of Rev. 15:2: "**Them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand on the glassy sea, having the harps of God.**" In other references to the Word of God—the Holy Scriptures—there are different and many comparisons used to that of "**harps**," and which are all in agreement with each other. In the words of Christ in John 4:14 to the woman of Samaria, there is that of "**living water**" within each believer—"a well of water springing up into eternal life." In Ephesians 6:17, and in the connection of the Christian's "**armour**" necessary for the fight of faith, the same Word of God is thus referred to: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the **Sword** of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." In the one Scripture, in Hebrews 6:18-20, there are two different comparisons in the same regard of the Divine Word and its provision for Christ's people—a **refuge** and an **anchor**: "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul,

both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that which is within the vale."

And all these diverse comparisons obtain with every believer's experiences in the life of faith—living water, a sword, a refuge, an anchor. And even these are only some and not all the comparisons presented, and which must not be confounded with each other, nor the different states indicated in each be viewed as conflicting. Although the comparison of the Divine Word to a "lamp" is not exclusive to the Parable of the Virgins, in Matt. 25:1-13, it has particular significance in it never previously obtaining. "The time of the end" brought the restoration on earth of the glorious truths of Christ's coming and Kingdom, and belief in these separated from all others, both religious and irreligious. All those obtaining this new "lamp" were also the same as the ones having the "living water, the Sword of the Spirit, being within the refuge and anchored in the invisible." The tracings of the course of the new "Second Advent" Movement from its beginning to Christ's shout and on to His personal coming could not, as they do not, include the wonderful changes brought at the appearing of His sign and the standing of the glassy sea.

There is not anything in Matt. 25:1-13 even suggesting Christ's sign; nor the singers of the new song, as in Rev. 14:3; nor the glassy sea with the victors standing upon it, "having the harps of God." The mention in Matt. 25:5, that "While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept," has connection with the previous state of exceptional activities and confident beliefs as to the certain times of the Bridegroom's coming, and the great reaction succeeding. There is not any association of "harps" with the one of "lamps" in the Parable of the Virgins at any stage of its tracing. But this does not suggest that at the stage marked in Rev. 15:2, and when the Divine Word becomes a "harp," it ceases to be a "lamp, or living water, or a sword, refuge and anchor." It is only by the aid of "The message to Philadelphia" in Rev. 3:8-10, the wonderful matters of the 144,000 singers of the new song, as in Rev. 14:1-5, and the glorious unfolding in Rev. 15:2-4, that the different state of the "wise" during the particular era

ending at Christ's shout to that of the "foolish" is fully revealed.

The full significance of Matt. 25:6,7, and of the fact and results of the Bridegroom's cry on the two classes of "virgins," requires other sections of Inspiration more fully treating on the whole subject to make manifest: "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." Although the "wise" have had harps as well as lamps for the era then ended, there is not any need for the mention of these in the matters presented. And it is not possible to even faintly apprehend the matters included in the words in verse 10, apart from the further revelations of the era between Christ's shout and His personal coming, in other sections: "The Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage." Much is to be done on earth, and by the "wise," during this final era before "were ready" obtains.

Moreover, it is by the aid of other parables—to be later considered—that it becomes manifest as to the different numbers of the virgins addressed by the Bridegroom's cry to the "ten" at the recorded first going forth. Only in Matt. 25:1, and not in any later verses and stages, is there the mention of "ten virgins," and only in verse 2 and at the same stage as verse 1 is there the mention of "and five were wise and five foolish." The fact of "the time of the end" being occupied with the movements of these illustrative "virgins," and the several generations of the same, further contributes to better understanding of the respective stages. The Divine estimate even of a professed faith in the truths of the "glorious appearing," which is far from being fully approved, is disclosed in the use of "foolish," as distinct from "wise and wicked," in this Parable of the Virgins. The forecast in Daniel 12:10 does not take cognisance of this class in its divisions of living mankind of "wise and wicked." But the use of "foolish" only obtains to the Bridegroom's cry. The later stage of His coming and its results recorded in Matt. 25:11 does not employ the term "foolish" as previous mention of the same class does: "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us." Every matter has deep significance, and is far from ordinary.

And all these considerations the more display that each section of inspiration in presenting its own particular features is an important part of a series of revelations made even more significant by the matters of the other sections. The forceful use of "lamps" in Matt. 25:1-3, and to "the time of the end" with its great "second advent" movement, is duplicated in the use of "harps" at the appearing of Christ's sign. The "harps" are an addition to the lamps. Watchers need lamps in the darkness to light their path to the coming One, and this need is not dispensed with when each "watcher" obtains a "harp" and becomes a "singer." Not until "exceptional redemption" was promised, and the standing of the glassy sea provided, was it possible to present Christ's living people as "having the harps of God." Not only is this mention of "the harps of God" an addition to the "lamps" of the virgins in Matt. 25:1-12, but also the essential explanation of the "new song" in Rev. 14:3. And in turn it is by the aid of the matter of Rev. 14:1-3 that the numbers "having the harps of God, and standing on the glassy sea," are made known without need for repetition in Rev. 15:2.

Only the once in all the Scriptures and at the one era marked is there reference to "harps of God," and to these being in the possession of victors on the glassy sea. And in this one reference there is the presenting of these "harps" as the source of the "song" sung by the victors, and not of their being used, as with other "harps," for being played upon. These "victors" are not harpers but singers. This discloses that the "harps of God" are just as much a reality as each of the other comparisons with the Divine Word previously noted. "Living water, the sword of the Spirit, a place of refuge, an anchor of the soul, lamps in the darkness," are all realities and not mere figures of speech as "the harps of God" are. But these "harps of God" are unlike any harps of men or of the inhabitants of heaven. This difference with the latter is marked in Rev. 14:2.

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." "Their harps," and not as in Rev. 15:2, and of the victors on the glassy sea, "the harps of God," is employed, as

hundred forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth."

Confession of faith is primarily to God and to, or before, men as a secondary or associated and inevitable outcome. "The angel and Church in Philadelphia," located in every land on earth, present an expression of testifying before men, as the singing victors on the glassy sea do of the same ones before God. And the "Word of My patience," kept and preached for the era to Christ's shout by the "angel and Church," comprises the same matters as the song sung before the throne and to Him Who sits thereon by the victors of faith.

The distinguishing of the "Beast and his image" in Rev. 15:2, and also of the victory over each, has bearing on the two themes and twice use of "song" in verse 3: "The song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." The victory over "the beast" finds expression in the "song of Moses the servant of God." The victory over "his image" is that confessed in "the song of the Lamb." The associating together of "Moses and the Lamb" marks indeed a "new song" to the confession of faith of the Christian Church of all previous portions of the Gospel age. In Apostolic times one cause of great conflict was that of seeking to make salvation by grace through faith in Christ, to be united with "keeping the Law of Moses," as in Acts 15:1, 5, 21. The distinguishing between Moses and Christ in the same regard of "law and grace" is the matter of John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

In Christ's Word to the "last days" the only One associated with Himself as the object of faith and confession is the Father, as in John 5:24, "He that heareth My Word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." And in Romans 10:9 there is the like duality in another form: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And so serious in its results was the combining of the law of Moses with the Gospel of Christ, that Galatians 5:4 was addressed to believers who were in the dangerous state of doing this. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, who-

soever of you seek to be justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

For the whole Gospel Age down to the era of Rev. 15:2-4 there was not any associating together of "Moses and the Lamb," in the confession of faith of Christ's people. But the "new song, the Word of My patience," associates the two. In the mention of Moses first there is the like order, as with the overcoming of the "beast," being first recorded in verse 2. It is in the world outside of the religious section that there originated theories of the creation of the material universe in known direct conflict with that written by "Moses the servant of God." The universe, as it is, is not a subject left for human finding out, but of clear unmistakable revelation through Moses. "Modern Science" has dared to pronounce the Mosaic account of creation and the nature of the material universe as "unscientific, legendary," without concerning itself with the revelations of redemption through "the Lamb," and has indoctrinated living mankind.

Moses as the writer of the Divine account of creation, and not Moses as the law-giver to Israel or mediator of the "law covenant," is the connection with the "new song" confessed by the victors on the glassy sea. "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God . . . saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty." This is the substance of the enlightened faith of these singers on the Divine works, drawn from the "Mosaic account" of creation, and which marks their victory over "the beast." Everything held and propagated by "Modern Science" on the creation and nature of the universe has been overcome by all these "singers." The fixed level earth as the centre and scene of all operations of human history; the three kinds of "lights"—sun, moon and stars—in their diverse effulgence and varied circuits "lighting the earth" and producing its times and seasons; the mighty oceans covering two-thirds of the earth's level surface, and kept in their appointed place without any danger of "again covering the earth," are all "great and marvellous" in a new and real sense to every singing victor. Each of these knows the universe as it really is.

The almost universal acceptance of the false theories of "Modern Science" on the nature of the created universe

make the living world to be in far greater "darkness" than the world of the days of Noah in the one regard. And the making manifest to living mankind after Christ's shout of this state will be through the last services of the victors over these "theories" before their translation from the earth. All the present efforts of these victors to convince others around them of the beauty and reasonable nature of the song of creation are productive of barren results, so deeply rooted is the prejudice for error in mankind. Human learning, human authority, the leaning upon the presumed ability of "clever men," make the most manifest facts of the Divine works to be entirely overlooked and set aside for mere figments of the imagination.

The religious section of mankind, save the victors of Rev. 15:2-4, have proved themselves the "image to the beast" by incorporating these false theories of the Divine works in their systems of belief. And it is astounding that contempt of the Divine Word of creation can be held, where there is professed faith in and reverence for the Word of Christ, with even confident expectation of Christ's approval. But, and as indicated in Rev. 15:2, "overcoming the image to the beast" is additional to that of overcoming the beast, as overcoming the "number of his name" is to both. The new song of the Lamb defined in its substance in verses 3, 4 marks the victory over the "image to the beast."

The Divine purpose in "the Lamb" is not of any interest to the world in general. This lack proves the beastly character of the world, as the false theories concerning "the Lamb" held and taught by the religious section identify the "image to the beast." The surpassing love of God and of Christ for mankind ought to appeal to every rational being and call forth a responsive love. And where such "response" obtains there ought not to be any cruel or brutal associations entertained, as to the operations of Divine love in present or in coming times. During the era to Christ's shout the ever-increasing "due truth" available to every seeker makes the presence of error to be without excuse. Everyone really anxious for light and truth obtains it to the pleasure of the gracious Giver. "He will guide you into all truth" is the promise to every seeker.

Not any of the personal Names of the Son of God are employed in Rev. 15:3, although that of "Moses" is in the first-mentioned "song." The redeeming name of "the Lamb" is the one used, and which serves to further emphasise the other recorded matters of "the song of the Lamb," marking the victory of the singers over the "image to the beast." Another designation of the Divine Being to that of "Lord God Almighty" in the first-mentioned song, is recorded of the song of the Lamb and agreeing with the particular matters associated: "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Nations." In these designations adapted to the two different themes of praise, as in the definitions of the "themes" themselves, there is the Divine summary and estimate rather than that of the exact form of daily praise from each and all of the victors. And the callous state of the religious section of mankind in regard to these "ways" of God, disclosed in their cruel and brutal teachings in this regard, makes "image of the beast" applicable to them. Understanding of His "ways" with all the creatures of His hands marks the first victory over this "image."

The second feature of victory is in the matter queried in the words of Rev. 15:4: "**W**ho shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? For Thou only art holy." This is a condensed summary of an enlightened faith in the universal provision through the Lamb. Human fitness and attainment through faith and obedience, such as obtains with the "children of God," make no interference with the free access of all others into the provision of redemption, and the reverencing of Jehovah and "glorifying His Name." Confession of this, cherishing it in the heart as a delightful provision of infinite love, marks a "victory" over the religious theories of human creeds wonderful in character.

"For Thou only art holy," is a further glorious truth which is only known by these victors, as it is the extreme expression of the matter of Acts 10:34: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." The Divine attitude of loving compassion is the same to all His creatures. He is not unkind and forbidding to some and the opposite to others, but **only kind** and gracious to all. The love of God for all His creatures is not altered by the present enmity and hatred of the majority of these to Him.

Love never changes, and never rests satisfied until its desires are realised. Conscious sin within, and realised utter unworthiness of His grace and its gifts, the more impress the beautiful truth of the universal love of God, “**For Thou only art holy.**”

“**For all nations shall come and worship before Thee,**” is a matter of further victory, as it marks the possession of the far-seeing sight of faith. This summary is of a confessed faith in a Divine promise associated with the still distant “new creation,” and which “promise” is recorded in Psalm 86:9: “**All nations whom Thou has made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy Name.**” The vast majority of these “all nations” are in the state of death, the living nations comprising a very small portion of these. Only enlightened faith knows what death is, as well as that which is to succeed death with all the dead. There was urgent need for the words of 1st Thess. 4:13 for the removal of false ideas concerning death and the state of the dead, with early believers as with all other believers of later times: “**For I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.**”

Confident faith in the coming again of “all nations whom Thou hast made”; of all these at that coming being worshippers of Jehovah, and “glorifying Thy Name,” has connection with the final feature of victory recorded in Rev. 15:4, “**For Thy judgments are made manifest.**” The very matters of the whole scene of the glassy sea and its singing victors are recorded in the associations of existing and impending “judgments.” The impending judgment on living mankind for neglect and refusal of “exceptional redemption” has parallel with the visitation of the Flood in Noah’s days. And the ending of the succeeding “harvest” is to witness another “judgment” finding a small and local illustration in the consuming with fire from heaven of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And the ending of the coming Millennial Age, as forecasted in Rev. 20:8, 9, has the association of “fire from heaven” upon the disobedient of that era.

In the revealed Divine estimate, the confessed faith in the coming again of “all nations” resulting from enlightened

faith in the Divine promise, and the deep understanding of God's judgments, completes victory over the "image of the beast" with everyone standing on the glassy sea.

The Eternal State into which "all nations" are to come comprises—as defined in Isaiah 65:17, Isaiah 66:22—"New Heavens and a New Earth." These two parts are to be the material abodes of a redeemed rational universe in the spiritual nature, and in the different glories of the "celestial and the terrestrial." The present earth is temporary, as also its enclosing material, "firmament," and its three kinds of "lights"—Sun, Moon and Stars. All these material parts of the "universe" are included in the beautiful words of 2nd Corinth. 4:18, together with the conditions and limitations of human life in the flesh. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary; but the things which are not seen are eternal." A new eternal earth is to be erected upon the same "foundations" beneath the present one, after the coming "thousand years'" reign of Christ and the consuming in the mighty "lake of fire" of the existing earth and its "firmament and lights." The Divine Home will be the "heaven" of the new earth, and visible to its spiritual inhabitants.

Only by "getting the victory over the beast and his image" is it possible to have understanding faith in the Divine forecasts of the "eternal state," both in its material parts, its provision of the spiritual nature, and its different "glories" to the redeemed and resurrected rational creation. This "victory" brings conceptions of promised coming things not possible with previous generations of Christ's people. By its aid even the wonderful glory of the coming "millennial age" is seen as but the prelude to the greater of the succeeding "new creation," and which latter is the goal of the instructed "looking" in such Scriptures as 2nd Peter 3:13: "We according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

In "Behold the Bridegroom cometh" there is another extensive consideration of the matters, both of Rev. 15:2-4 and Rev. 14:1-5 to that of this work. The interested reader is referred to this other "exposition" for features not treated in the present writing on "The Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb" and "Just and True are Thy Ways."

CHAPTER III.

“Parallel Days to Christ’s Coming.”

Section One.

The exhortation in Matt. 24:44 and other Scriptures has had appeal to all generations of the Gospel Age: “Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.” To all generations, save the one living at the era reaching to this “coming,” the appeal for being “ready” has connection with His glorious personal appearing. Making “ready” with the living generation is for a previous “coming,” and which effectively prepares for the succeeding “personal” one. These two “comings” of Christ to the living generation have illustration in the “object lesson” in Matt. 24:37-39, of Noah’s coming into the Ark and the later coming of the Flood. To both of these there is the application of the forecast, “So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.” The “interval” of seven days between these two comings in the days of Noah is included in this.

It was the first coming that was placed before Noah at the commencement of the era of preparation, and which ensured the certainty of “exceptional deliverance” at the succeeding coming of the Flood: “And thou shalt come into the Ark; thou and thy sons; and thy wife; and thy son’s wives with thee.” The “exceptional redemption” promised at the appearing of Christ’s sign has the parallel first “coming” of Christ as the time of its confirmation with all the “ye” proving faithful in “keeping the Word of My patience.” All these are marked for a preliminary standing before the living world parallel with that of Noah’s, during an “interval” realising an enlarged likeness to that of the seven days to the coming of the Flood.

The Divine speaking to Noah at the expiration of the appointed era of respite and preparation is the pattern and likeness of Christ’s speaking on the appointed day which marks the terminus of the present era of preparation:

"Come thou and all thy house into the Ark." But an addition to this speaking to Noah and his house obtains in the parallel speaking by Christ to His proved faithful people, and which finds first mention and illustration in the parable of the virgins in Matt. 25:6-10. Not any outside of Noah's house had any belief in the Divine Word concerning the Ark or the coming of the Flood, and so were excluded from any part in the Divine speaking to Noah and his house. But the forecast in the illustrative matter in Matt. 25:6-10 presents in living features the hearing of Christ's speaking from heaven by "foolish virgins" as well as by the "wise ones" of Christ's people. The one speaking is addressed to the two distinct communities in every land on earth, but not to any others of mankind.

There was the necessity for this illustrative parable of the virgins in conjunction with the forecast and comparison with the "days of Noah," to present the variations in the one important regard of the subjects of the Divine speaking at the different eras. But in all other features there is further confirmation of the "object lesson" provided in Matt. 24:37-39 in the illustrative matters in Matt. 25:6-10. In the one there is the "object lesson" from past history, in the other there is the presenting of the realised likeness of the Divine speaking, the succeeding interval, and the personal coming.

Christ's speaking from heaven, defined as a "shout" in 1st Thess. 4:16 and in Matt. 25:6 as a "cry," is exactly parallel with the voice of God inviting Noah and his house into the Ark. It was at this "entry" that there was the added speaking to Noah as in Genesis 7:4: "For yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights." This "likeness" of the interval in the "object lesson" in Matt. 24:38, 39, and the illustrative matter in Matt. 25:6-10, could not be embodied in the prophetic forecast in 1st Thess. 4:16, 17 without confusing the order of events there presented. The exceptional order with the "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," of being redeemed from the earth and from among men, apart from the sleep of death, includes other exceptional features during the "interval" succeeding Christ's "shout."

The vast numbers of "pairs" of irrational creatures entering the Ark with Noah and his house made necessary the seven days' interval for full preparations and arrangements for the coming Flood. Each of the eight persons of Noah's house had services to render to the other inmates of the Ark. A last witness to the human world outside was also provided during the seven days, of the victory of faith with Noah and his wife. There were not any "foolish virgins" in that world seeking for further light, or in any way sharing Noah's faith. And the much bigger world of the present era, together with the ending of the offer to living mankind of "exceptional redemption" from the earth, make requirements for further enlightening mankind not obtaining with the world of the days of Noah. But although differing in form there is the likeness in "kind" between the two "intervals," and the respective services and witness.

Noah was justified before the world when God took him out of the world and into the Ark. And for the seven days' interval Noah was the centre of wondering interest to all mankind. This "taking out of the world," and manifestation in a new standing of marked approval previous to the coming of the Flood, is the likeness of coming things with Christ's living people. God's speaking to Noah at his entry into the Ark of the seven days' interval to the coming of the Flood, together with the spoken invitation into the Ark, are both included in the comparisons and forecasts in Matt. 24:37-39: "So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." And although it would appear utterly impossible to provide the required universal manifestation of Christ's living people in an interval of "seven days," the "seven" is the likeness of the coming "interval" and maybe weeks, or a jubilee of days from Christ's shout to His personal coming. A "jubilee of days" elapsed between Christ's Resurrection to the opening of the kingdom on the day of Pentecost, and this had been typified in the matters in Leviticus 23:15-17.

Not any of the faithful "elders" of that first age shared such a manifestation of Divine approval before the World as that given to Noah for the seven days' interval to the Flood as preceding the succeeding deliverance by the Ark. And this likeness with Christ's living people and

their abounding privileges over all the faithful of the Gospel Age, is so remarkable as to merit and receive particular revelation and exposition. A series of isolated privileges with the living people of Christ at His coming, over those possible with all previous ones of the whole age, is presented in the forecasts of coming things. The preserving alive of the last of His people in order that they may be translated from the earth without need for falling asleep in death is but the first of the "series" and which involves the necessity for the others.

The fact of the ending of the "Great Salvation" offered for the Gospel Age; the relationship of the living generation to the particular offer of "exceptional redemption" for the era to Christ's shout; the impending visitation on the world parallel with the Flood, have all their bearing on the events of the coming "interval" which make manifest to living mankind the ones to be translated from the earth as Christ's approved people. Together with the likeness of coming things in this regard in the "object lesson" presented in Matt. 24:37-39, the illustrative forecast in Matt. 25:6-10, 1st Thess. 4:15-17, Rev. 14:3-5, particular features make necessary the parable in Matt. 20:1-16. This has its preface in the remarkable words of Matt. 19:30: "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."

As disclosed in the succeeding parable setting forth the order intended in these words, "first" applies to all generations of Christ's people to the living one of His coming, and truly comprises "many" by comparison with the lesser numbers of the "last." The "many" to be "last" comprise all the "first" and not merely some. The like distinguishing into two divisions of Christ's people obtains in the forecast in 1st Thess. 4:15-17, and in the designations of "dead in Christ and we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." This exact forecast in its divisions of two contributes to right understanding of the two of "first and last" in the parable in Matt. 20:1-16.

A "vineyard" is the comparison with the "kingdom of heaven" in this parable, and a day of twelve hours the one of the Gospel Age, during which the "Lord of the vineyard" goes out at different hours to hire labourers. "Early morning, third hour, sixth, ninth and eleventh hours, are the ones of the "hiring." All the "labourers"

entering into the vineyard down to those of the "eleventh" hour are comprised in the division of "first," and the hired ones of the eleventh hour are the ones said to be "last." The matters of making these "last" to be the first, and the more numerous first to be last, illustrated in the parable, are twofold in character in agreement with the facts of the present order and forecasts of coming things. The "we which are alive" are to be the first to be called by Christ as His approved people and in His shout, and are the only ones to share exceptional redemption from the earth.

These "we" are the same as the "last" in the parable, and as "eleventh hour labourers," exempt from the more grievous and trying experiences coming to the various sections of the "first labourers." Not only the fact of the calling of the "last" labourers first, but the justifying of this as right, is bound up in this parable and its illustrative matters. The question of how God could bestow the same celestial inheritance upon those who have not suffered for the Name and cause of Christ as others have, is met and answered in the words of Matt. 20:15: "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own?" In this, and apart from discussing the Divinely approved tests of faith and obedience with the "last" as with the "first," there is the expression of the like matter as in Ephes. 2:8, 9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that **not of yourselves**; it is the **gift of God**. Not of works lest any man should boast."

The permitting of outside conditions of the Divine service comparatively easy and free from all violence, with the "last," and not possible with the "first," is one expression of the "last being first." But the full display of the "first being last," as well as of the "last being first," is that of Matt. 20:8: "So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith unto His steward, Call the labourers and give them their hire, **beginning from the last unto the first.**" In this parable, and unlike that of the "virgins" in Matt. 25:1-12, the Father is prominently presented, both as the "Lord of the vineyard," and as the One seeking for and hiring all the labourers, together with the authorising of "His steward" at the coming of even to call and pay the labourers. In this "seeking" by the Father of all the

labourers there is the same as in Christ's forecast in John 4:23: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the **Father seeketh such to worship Him.**" This "seeking" is the one of the parable and by the "Lord of the vineyard."

And it is in agreement with all prophetic forecasts that Christ and not the Father both calls and rewards His people in the two divisions of last and first. Not until the stage in this parable marked in verse 8 and the words, "So when even was come," is Christ introduced and as the "steward" of the Lord of the vineyard—"His steward." Although seeking and hiring all the labourers for His vineyard, the Lord of the vineyard does not call these at "even" for their wages, but instructs "His steward" to do this and the order of the calling. "So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith unto His steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first." The same "calling," in its application to the one division of the "last," is the matter of the Bridegroom's cry in Matt. 25:6, but in associations which could not be presented in Matt. 20:8. The cry of the Bridegroom calls others not included in the parable of the labourers as well as the "last" referred to in it.

Moreover, there is not and could not be any reference in the parable of the "virgins" to the Bridegroom being instructed by the Father when and whom to call. Each parable presents its own features, all of which are illustrative of coming things forecasted in exact prophecy. The illustrative matter in Matt. 20:8 of the Lord of the vineyard instructing His steward to call the labourers has powerful connection with Christ's words in Matt. 24:36, Mark 13:32, and previously considered: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the **Son**, but the **Father.**" Not until the coming of the "even," the secret day of Christ's shout, and the instructing by the Father to utter His voice from heaven, does the **Son** know of "that day" and make known the same to the appointed hearers on earth. The "even," as in Matt. 20:8, is the same day as in Matt. 25:6: "And at midnight there was a cry made."

This speaking by the Father to the Son and by Christ to the "last" of His people and to "foolish virgins" marks the introduction of a "speaking" era to the later personal coming. This is outside of the scope of the parable of the labourers in Matt. 20:1-16, and which is limited to the display of the two features already considered. The only purpose justifying the calling of the last before the first is that of their "speaking" to the world of the second advent as the manifested people of Christ. This is quite distinct from the isolated privilege granted these "last" of being translated from the earth at the personal coming of Christ. All these are to be made known to the world before their translation as Christ's approved people of the era ending at His shout. This "making known" is to be in such assemblies for worship and preaching utterly impossible at any previous period of human history.

The order outlined in the parable in Matt. 20:1-16, and the one in Matt. 25:1-12, of the calling of the last of Christ's people first and the excluding of all the "first," is a totally different one to that of 1st Thess. 4:15-17. The latter includes both divisions of Christ's people and presents the "first" as first in meeting Christ and the "last" as last in meeting Him. Not even the Apostles and early Christians nor the "saints and witnesses" of Jesus of the "dark ages" could be included amongst those first called by Christ. In the later regard of meeting Christ all the "first" have precedence of all the "last," even though this is that of momentary only and not even of minutes, not to mention hours or days: "And the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

The revealing of this order in meeting Christ in 1st Thess. 4:15-17, with the further particulars in 1st Cor. 15: 51-54, the more confirms the different one obtaining at Christ's shout with the living "last" of Christ's people, as in Mat. 20:16: "So the last shall be first, and the first last." The matter presented in Matt. 20:8 and of the speaking by Christ is that of "calling the labourers." This, in agreement with the likeness of the Divine invitation to Noah to enter the Ark, includes that of the Divine estimate of the "called ones." With the invitation to enter the

Ark, there was the giving of the Divine verdict on Noah's course during the era then ended, as in Genesis 7:1: "For thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." Noah, with all others of that "generation," had passed the era in the presence of the Divine judgment seat, and its verdict was delivered to Noah concerning himself and all others when he entered the Ark.

For all the times to Christ's appearing in flesh God was the "Judge of all the earth," and all the faithful "elders" received His verdict of approval at the end of their life of faith. This is the matter of Hebrews 11:2-39, Revised Version: "For therein the elders had witness borne to them. And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith." All these "elders" will arise in the Resurrection in a celestial nature without need for any further inquiry into their life's course on earth.

Christ's declaration in John 5:22, 23 announced the change then commencing and to obtain for all then coming ages: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." The calling of the last of His people first and previous to His personal coming has several exceptional features expounded in other references and powerfully illustrated in particular parables, bearing on the matter of His "judgment" of His living people. With the more numerous "first" of His people, the dead in Christ, His commendation as expressing the verdict of His "judgment seat" will be imparted at His personal coming and their resurrection. But the verdict on the "last," the "we which are alive and remain," is not delayed for His personal coming, but is comprised in His "shout." In this regard there is also the reason why of all living mankind only "foolish virgins" share with Christ's approved people in hearing His shout and in being designated "virgins." By profession of faith in His coming and kingdom on earth these are included in the dual matters.

Christ's judgment of all the peoples of the Gospel Age outside of His believing people will find first expression at His personal appearing for His people. All others will be left in the death state for a later resurrection. Not any

further infliction will be visited on these rejected ones from Christ's nature and glory to those experienced during life preceding death. His verdict on the living generation neglectful of the offer of "exceptional redemption" is considered in succeeding sections of this chapter. The bringing upon these of a visitation parallel with that of the Flood in its severity marks the Divine estimate of the neglect and refusal of the unprecedented offer to living mankind.

The remarkable matter of Christ's "shout" conveying a totally different message to the two different communities all over the earth addressed in it, is that of the different verdicts of His "judgment seat." In several Scriptures there is reference to this "judgment seat of Christ" as entirely distinct from that of His throne. And in all these there is the intimation of the subjects of this "judgment seat" being Christ's people only, and not mankind in general. During the Gospel Age, and as revealed in many Scriptures, Christ is seated in the Father's throne, and as Heir of His own coming throne on earth. His control of all earthly affairs with the nations is a matter of several references in agreement with the imparting of all power to Him at His resurrection. He is, as declared in Rev. 1:5, "The Prince of the Kings of the earth," and in this national department administers such judgment as is just and approved by Him.

The relationship of "High Priest over His house," or the house of God, is the totally one in regard to His own people. Out of many beautiful references in this connection designed to inspire confidence and delight in all the subjects of His ministrations, there is this matter in Hebrews 7:24, 25: "But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood. Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them." The several references to the "judgment seat of Christ" have connection with this position of the High Priest in the Father's throne. This "throne" is His "Seat" and where He administers the affairs of everyone in His "house." Such references as Romans 14:10, 11, 2nd Cor. 5:10, have application to Christ's administration as High Priest during His sitting in the Father's throne. "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ," is

future only with each of these "we" so far as the future of their lives are concerned, and the making manifest of the verdict arrived at by Christ concerning each at His coming.

Instead of this "judgment seat of Christ" being some tribunal set up at His return, and for the reviewing of the previous life's course of each of His people in their hearing, the truth is that the whole Gospel Age has marked its "setting up" and operation with every one of Christ's people. Every believer in all generations of the Age is before this "judgment seat" for their life's course succeeding believing. At the falling asleep of His faithful people there is only the waiting for the day of His coming, for the expression of His approving verdict in their glorious resurrection and His spoken commendation. There is not any reminder from Christ with any of these of then past mistakes or failures. Divine forgetfulness obtains in this regard as in Hebrews 10:17, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." In the spoken verdict on His faithful servants, recorded in Matt. 25:21-23, there is generous commendation on account of "Thou hast been faithful in a few things," apart from any mention of the many others in reproof, or required explanation concerning them.

Exactly the same matter, referred to in Romans 14:10, 11, 2nd Cor. 5:10 as being "made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ," is the theme of 1st Peter 4:17-18: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" The commencement of the work of Christ's judgement seat is located in this reference in the first century and with those comprised in the "house of God." In the reference to these as "righteous," in contrast with all others as "ungodly and sinners," there is also the matter of their "salvation" being of Divine grace alone and not of any merits or fitness of the subjects. Not any of those constituted "righteous" could be saved to the "Great Salvation" if they were tested by the law of fitness or attainment. It is only by being regarded as "righteous," by being justified by faith, that the judgment then commencing could regard any as "safe (saved)" so long as each continued in the "house of God." But the verdict on

each of these awaited the then distant day of Christ's coming, even though present in the mind of Christ.

In Christ's words in Luke 17:10 there is the like matter as in 1st Peter 4:18 concerning the absence of all merit in the "righteous," and of Divine grace being wholly responsible for their salvation: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." Those who refuse the gracious provision of becoming "righteous" by faith, continue to be "ungodly and sinners" on that account and not because of the righteous" being sinless or meriting the standing graciously given them.

These considerations on the "judgment seat of Christ" contribute to understanding of the particular parables of Christ, dealing with the commanding of His living people by His shout from heaven. The spoken message from heaven to the living hearers on earth conveys the verdict of Christ's Judgment Seat, apart from any necessity for speaking or appearing in Christ's presence of the ones addressed. The entrance into celestial glory of all the "first" of Christ's people marks the like speaking by Him to each at His succeeding personal coming. The fact that living approved believers do not need to wait for their appearing in His personal presence for the favourable verdict of His "judgment seat," further confirms the truths just considered. Of necessity the verdict on all proved "Philadelphians" is fully arrived at by the High Priest on the day of His "shout," the last day of their testing and of their "walking by faith." The matter of 1st Cor. 4:5 has first application to Christ's shout, and to approved living believers all over the earth hearing His verdict on the previous life's course of each. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God." The speaking to the living "last labourers first" is this "making manifest," as the personal coming and its speaking will do the same to the more numerous "first labourers." There are thus two expressions of "making manifest."

Christ spake particular and powerful parables in this same regard of "making manifest" the verdict of His "judgment seat." And with these as with all parables, the illustrative materials employed are designed to more fully display the exactness of the central matters presented. In Matt. 25:14-30 there is the "parable of the talents"; in Luke 19:11-27 "the parable of the pounds" is presented. Both have application to the one general subject of the Divine cause on earth during the Gospel Age, "the kingdom of heaven." Both commence with the matter of the Lord's departure to a "far country," and His bestowing upon His servants the authority and equipment for His service during His absence. In Matt. 25:14, 15 there is this commencement: "For it is as a Man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them His goods. And unto one He gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took His journey."

In this there is the distinguishing between the "talents" given and the "ability" of each recipient. All the talents given comprise, as in verse 14, "His goods." But the different numbers of talents given to the three servants are bestowed in the regard of, "according to his several ability" of each servant. In verses 16-18 there is the forecast of how these "servants" would use the "talents" given them during their Lord's absence. And in verses 19-30 the Lord's coming and "reckoning" with the same three servants is presented, and its results in the commanding of two of them and condemning the third. In the regard of "commanding" the two "faithful servants," it is important to note that verses 21, 23 do not specify what the promised "rulership" will consist of. This is the matter of the speaking to the two faithful servants, as in verses 21, 23: "His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The different speaking to the third servant is the matter of verses 26, 27, and includes that of the designation of "unprofitable" as in verse 30.

This tracing of the features of the "parable of the talents" will assist to the recognition of the likeness and differences, in the "parable of the pounds" in Luke 19:

11-27. The necessity for and significance of these "differences" between the two parables, setting forth the one general and beautiful subject, will, it is hoped, be manifest from succeeding tracings. In Luke 19:11-13 there is this commencement: "And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return. And He called His **ten servants**, and delivered unto them **ten pounds**, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." In this there is the recording of the particular time of and cause for the speaking of this parable, and which "time" was that of Christ's riding into Jerusalem on the "colt of an ass" five days before His death, as in John 12:1, 12-15. There is also an addition in Luke 19:12 to the matter of the mention of the same "departing to the far country" in Matt. 25:14, in its declared purpose, "To receive for Himself a **kingdom**, and to return."

The speaking of the "parable of the talents," Matt. 25:14-30, was, as recorded in Matt. 26:1, 2, three days later, or two days before His death, and as clearly defined in Matt. 24:3, was spoken only in the hearing of the Apostles and "As He sat upon the Mount of Olives."

The calling of "**ten servants** and delivering unto them **ten pounds**," as in Luke 19:13, differs in both features with the calling of **three** servants and giving them respectively five, two and one "talents," recorded in Matt. 25:15, even though both alike expound the one subject. In New Testament terms a "talent of money" was of the value of £206 5s., while a "pound, or mina," was of the value of £3 8s. 9d. But in Luke 19:15-19, as in Matt. 25:20-23, there is the presenting of **two** servants as receiving their Lord's approval in being designated "good and faithful" at His reckoning with them. And there is an addition in Luke 19:17, 19 to the commendation in Matt. 25:21, 23, as there is also in the use of "**first and second**" with the two faithful servants. This is the beautiful matter of Luke 19:16-19: "Then came the first, saying, Lord, Thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And He said unto him, Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little have thou authority over **ten cities**. And the **second**,

came, saying, Lord, Thy pound hath gained five pounds. And He said likewise to him, Be thou also over **five cities.**" Both receive "authority"; the difference is only in degree.

And this serves to present Christ's people in the relationship of "labourers" in the Lord's work, while that of the parable of the "talents" in Matt. 25:14-30 presents them as **servants**, or purchased ones of Christ. It is as "servants" that the entering into the one "joy of their Lord" is the matter of Matt. 25:21, 23, and apart from particular definition of "authority" or rulership. The Grace of God manifest in the "free gift" of His nature to every one believing in His Son is beyond estimate in value, and could only be presented by comparison with the most valuable of "money"—**talents**. In 2nd Corinth. 9:15 there is the becoming outburst from one in possession of "five talents" in regard to the abundant Grace of God: "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." The differences of "five, two and one" in the receiving of this gracious gift, is that of responsive love. And the "gaining" with the two servants of five and two talents more is that of "growing up into Christ," or as in Ephes. 3:17-19: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." All those realising this during their life of faith increase their original gift of "five or two talents" one hundred per cent., according to their "several ability." Each of these is the maximum—the utmost possible—and is alike precious to the Lord. There could not be the use of "first and second" to the two faithful servants, as in Matt. 25:21, 23, as there is and must be in Luke 19:16,18 of the same "**two**," but in the different regard of "labourers." These two relationships are made manifest in the little parable in Mark 13:34: "It is as a man taking a far journey, who left His house, and gave authority to His servants, and to every man his work, and directed the porter to watch."

And it is to the one inheritance of "the joy of their Lord" that the Apostle includes every "lover of His appearing," in the obtaining of the like precious "**crown**"

with himself, as in 2nd Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." And nothing could be more powerful than Christ's forecast in Matt. 25:18, and of a third "servant," entirely different to the two receiving the five and two talents, in not possessing any responsive love: "But he that had received one (talent) went and digged in the earth and hid his Lord's money." Ths "forecast" commeneed realisation in the days of Christ on earth and throughout the times of the Apostles. Loving earthly things more than the "talent," and submerging it in them, has several mention of some during those early days, such as in Philip. 3:18, 19: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their stomach and whose glory is their shame, **who mind earthly things.**"

And as disclosed in other forecasts, the numbers of those illustrated by the one servant that "digged in the earth and hid his Lord's money," are far more numerous in every generation of the age than those in the illustrative two servants receiving the gift of five and two talents and increasing them double. The omission of this forecast in the "parable of the pounds," and the introducing of the same class at the era of Christ's coming only, has powerful connections which will be manifest in succeeding considerations.

The mention of "ten servants" and of ten pounds being divided equally amongst them—one pound each—at the departure of the Lord to the "far country," in Luke 19: 12, 13, has the like significance as that of Romans 10: 12, 13 and similar Scriptures: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto **all that call upon Him.** For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." In the use of "ten" in Luke 19:13 (ten servants), as in all other uses in parallel Scriptures, there is intended a representative number, and, like the use of "whosoever" in other Scriptures, involves that not any are excluded, nor any "respect of persons." Just as everyone has the like offer of the Divine invitation to receive His "unspeakable

gift," so the "work of the Lord" during His absence is alike the privilege of every "servant." This is the significance of giving to every "servant one pound," as well as the "talents," and in this also, as with the talents, the reasonable order is that of Mark 13:34: "And to every man his work." Each has a work in "the work."

Such references as that in 1st Corinth. 12:18 serve to further explain this matter of standing and work with each true believer: "But now hath God set the members **every one** of them in the body, as it hath pleased **Him**." There is free access to every willing and seeking one into this "body," but the place of each one coming into it is appointed by the **one** inviting "whosoever will."

It is manifest from the recorded matters of the coming of the Lord to "reckon with His servants"—in Luke 19:15-20 (as in Matt. 25:19-24)—that the reference to "ten servants" being called and receiving one pound each at His departure has the like significance as the matter of Matt. 22:14: "For **many** are called, but **few** are chosen." All the ten servants called had equal opportunity of becoming the "chosen" by having the "talent and the pound." At the Lord's coming recorded in Luke, as in Matthew, the proved "faithful servants" are presented as "two servants," and the "unprofitable" as **one**. There is not any use of "ten" in the associations of the Lord's coming to "reckon with the servants," but only—and in Luke 19:12, 13—at the Lord's departure. There is not any feature of "representative" in the uses of "two and one" in the regard of the Lord's spoken verdicts at His coming; rather of two communities of living **mankind** and two sections in the first of these—a "first and second," as in Luke 19:16, 18. The community indicated in the designation of "unprofitable" has not any divisions of "first and second," but is presented in Luke 19:20 as one, and in these words, "And another came!"

"First and second" are employed of the composite community of Christ's faithful people, but "**another**" and not "**third**" is employed of the other community brought into the associations of Christ's speaking at His coming. Previous to the different speaking by the Lord to the two communities there is—in both parables of the talents and pounds—the recorded speaking to Him of these. His

speaking is presented as being in reply to theirs. But the speaking recorded of both these communities is far more comprehensive than that of any one address; it is rather that of summarising the use of the mouth during the course then ending, as in Matt. 12:37: "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." The explanation of this speaking through a course of life is that of verse 34: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

During the era from Christ's sign to His shout there is daily display of the different speaking in the hearing of Christ by the constituents of these communities, and which determines Christ's different speaking at His coming. The same obtained in every generation of the age previous to Christ's sign. Not any particular generation is intended in the matter of Malachi 3:16, 17, but every one of the age to the glorious terminus marked: "Then they that feared the Lord **spake** often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Living Philadelphians have a particular place in this forecast, and the **only one** in the forecast of Revelation 14:3, and a form of "speaking" which is highly approved in heaven, as it is the only one of its kind ever spoken in praise to God by united worshippers on earth.

A beautiful feature of both Parables—talents and pounds—is that of the credited increase with the two sections of Christ's faithful people. With all their talents there is that of one hundred per cent. with each. In Matt. 25:20, 22, the two servants with five and two talents respectively, are presented as saying, "Thou deliverest unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more." (In verse 22 the other address has two instead of five.) In these verses, as in Luke 19:16, 18, and in regard to the Pounds, there is the like dividing into two of the "faithful servants," but **not** the use of "first and second" to them. And the distinct speaking of the two sections is marked in both.

It is manifest to sober thought that Christ and not the two sections of His faithful people alone knows of the increase from five to ten talents of the one section and of two to four talents of the other. In recording this matter as proceeding from the mouths of the two "faithful servants," there is the powerful intimation of, "By thy words shalt thou be justified," and of the approved course of life in His service then ending in such delightful associations. The like increase with the two sections and with regard to the pounds; the like placing in the mouths of the two the declaration of this increase, but the use of "first and second" is the matter of Luke 19:16, 18: "Then came the first, saying, Lord, Thy pound hath gained ten pounds." And the second came, saying, Lord, Thy pound hath gained five pounds." This was greater increase even than that of the talents of one hundred per cent. each—from five to ten and from two to four. With the "first" the increase from one pound to ten pounds is 1000 per cent.; with the "second" the increase from one pound to five pounds is 500 per cent.

How marvellous is this credited increase of talents and pounds with the two sections of Christ's faithful people! The mind is filled with wondering adoration at the Divine generosity in both regards, as it is with enlarged conceptions of the Divine estimates of "faithful" to His Word and service. It is almost beyond human conception that every one pronounced "faithful" by Christ is credited by Him with such amazing increase of His free gift as one hundred per cent., and that of preserving His cause on earth as five hundred and one thousand per cent. It is by this verdict of His "Judgment Seat" that the many Scriptures telling of the glory of the Divine service become more real in meaning. Romans 8:18 is one of these as it was written by the great sufferer in Christ's cause in establishing the Gospel among the Gentiles: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." And here is another from an Apostle whose life ended in martyrdom for Christ after many years of the "sufferings" referred to by him in 1st Peter 4:12-13: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you,

as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory is revealed, **ye may be glad with exceeding joy.**"

And not the least evidence of the boundless Divine generosity with His proved faithful people is that of including amongst the "partaking of Christ's sufferings" the experiences in His service of the living "last" of His people during the era from His Sign to His Shout. The complete absence of all violence; full liberty to believe, confess and serve the glorious truth, is the privileged lot of living Philadelphians. And assuredly all these have regarded themselves as utterly unworthy of being compared or associated with the suffering "first" of His people of previous times of the Age. And it is just as certain that those "first," like the more privileged living "last," when meeting the Lord will be ready to say that which Christ declared was becoming all His people in Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do."

This the more emphasises that the dual "saying" of the two sections of faithful servants regarding their "gaining" the increased talents and pounds is that of their confessed faith and of their active association with His work during the era then ended. For all that "era" there has been with each that which is beautifully defined in both Parables (talents and pounds) as "Came, saying," and the addition, as in Matt. 25:20, of "Came and brought other five talents, saying." And, as noted later, the coming and saying of the "unprofitable servant" has the like area, domain, of the era then ended and not of just the one portion then present and of the Lord's coming to deliver His verdict. Not any persons would ever conceive or even dare to say to Christ at His coming the two sayings recorded in Matt. and Luke of the "unprofitable servant," and daily said in the hearing of Christ during the era preceding that coming in action and confession.

In contrast with the two "faithful servants" in the Parables of the talents and pounds, the Parable of the Sower has the definition of the same community as "three" in

Matt. 13:23: "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word and understandeth; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." This is the same in kind as with the diversities of talents and pounds, and expressing the matter of Matt. 25:15: "Every man according to his several ability." And in this also the respective "growths"—100, 60, 30—are alike fully satisfactory to the gracious sower, and wholly apart from any reflections on those comprising either the sixty or thirty fold. Indeed, as we shall recognise in further tracings, the two of "sixty and thirty fold" are the constituents of the section designated the "second" in Luke 19:18 and with the like increase of "five pounds." And they are the "servant" referred to in Matt. 25:22 with the "two talents" increased to four. And for particular reasons (again disclosing Divine attention to and generosity with "particular" faith and service) the "hundredfold," as in Matt. 13:23, is the same as the "ten talents and ten pounds" of the one section, and designated the "first" in Luke 19:16, "Then came the first, saying."

Thus, in the Parables and the Pounds, there is the including in the one section of the composite community of "faithful servants" the two of "sixty and thirty fold"! And there is the crediting to all these the increase of 100 per cent. of the gracious gift imparted to each, and of 500 per cent. in the regard of "occupying" in His work. All these are alike in regard to the "talents and pounds," even though there are diversities in their faith and service—"sixty, thirty." Were it not for "particular" faith and service imperatively required for the "growth of the sixty and thirty fold" as well as for its own of "one hundredfold," the two of "sixty and thirty fold" would be the only ones and abundantly sufficient. But, and whether fully realised by all or not, it is true that the increase to sixty and thirty is brought through the growth and service of the section graciously designated "first" in Luke 19:16, and "one hundredfold" in Matt. 13:23.

The Divine cause on earth for the Gospel age—Kingdom of Heaven—has comprised in every generation two sections, and this as varying with the methods in previous

dispensations. There are diversities of attainments in faith and service in each of these "sections" in their respective constituents. The first display of these "two" sections was, of course, at the commencement of the age and new "kingdom" then established. One of several definitions agreeing with the first history of the Christian community is that of Ephes. 4:11-12: "And He gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers. **For** the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for edifying of the **body of Christ**." This duality was that of apostolic times, and altered only in succeeding times by dispensing with the further need of the two sections of the ministering portion of "Apostles and Prophets," but of necessity retaining the others "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" in all then coming times and generations.

In further definition of the "first and second" in Luke 19:16, 18, there are such Scriptures as 1st Timothy 5:17, imparted by inspiration through one who gladly sacrificed all home comforts, all worldly pursuits and employments in the "work of the Ministry" for others and his own "growth" into Christ: "Let the **elders** that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine." Another who refers to himself as "also an elder" appeals, as recorded in 1st Peter 5:1-4, to "The elders which are among you, feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples for the flock. And when the **Chief Shepherd** shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." The "crown" for faithful elders is the one of this reference.

In verse 6 of the same chapter there is the promise to all the "flock of God" giving heed to the exhortation to "humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may **exalt you in due time**." And both these distinct promises to the two sections of the one community have bearing on the "first and second," as in Luke 10. 16 17 and at Christ's Coming. The "particular crown"

to be given to faithful elders as distinct from that to be bestowed on "the flock of God" ministered to is the matter of Luke 19:17, as differing with the one of verse 19: "Have thou authority over ten cities; be thou also over five cities." When this is understood as being addressed to communities respectively, and that these when assembled are some millions in numbers, the mention of "ten and five cities" can be seen as comprising a bigger immensity than themselves. It can be also recognised as forecasting degrees of "authority" in the Kingdom with the two section of the one glorious company of "joint heirs with Christ."

But this difference in "authority" between the "first and second" has the connection of the "pounds," and is the fruitage of the Divine service of the present order. The increasing of the one pound to ten pounds by the "first" is the Divine estimate of the greater responsibility, the more intensive labours of the "elders"—the ministering section—over the "labours" of the other section. But the humblest of the "second" in their efforts in His present service brings in His estimate the increase from one pound to five pounds, five hundred per cent., as each is to receive a place of "authority" in His Kingdom. But it is in agreement with then past services that Luke 19: 16-19 does **not** record any **bringing** of the "ten and five pounds" by the two faithful servants to their Lord, as verse 20 **does** of the bringing of the one unused "pound" to the Lord by the "unfaithful servant." The two "faithful servants" in increasing their respective "one pound" into ten and five have fully invested them in His service of the present life. But this is the matter of Luke 19:19, and as differing with the two "faithful servants" and their coming and saying in verses 16-18: "And another came, saying, Lord, behold here is Thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin." (This coming, and saying, and bringing, will be considered later in its own place.)

As marked in the reply of the Lord to the "wicked servant," the "ten and five pounds" of the two "faithful servants" are in "the bank" still earning increased interest at the coming of the Lord. This is the matter in Luke 19:23 and addressed to the one bringing back the "one pound" given him by the Lord: "Wherefore then gavest not thou

My money into the bank, that at My coming I might have received mine own with usury." This "bank" is the Bank of Heaven, and which was first mentioned by Christ to His disciples as the safest of all banks, as in Luke 12:33-34: "Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the Heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." The Lord's work on earth is a most sacred trust, and all time, effort and money spent in it is invested in the Bank of Heaven and certain to bring increase, "interest." It is in the like regard that 1st Corinthians 15:58 gives its assurance and guarantees, and which cannot be seen from present results, but only by the eye of faith: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The Bank of Heaven can never break nor make unprofitable investments.

It is thus in the regard of the Lord's work of the present order, the varied service of the "one pound" that the uses of "first and second" are employed and the degrees of "authority" revealed in Luke 19:16-19. But in Matt. 25:20-23, the gracious gift of "sonship" in Christ is the one of the "talents," and their respective increase from five to ten and from two to four. In this the same two sections are the ones addressed as "good and faithful," as are addressed in Luke 19:17-19: "Thou good servant; because thou hast been faithful." The "servant" receiving the five talents and increasing them into ten, as in Matt. 25:20, is the same as the one in Luke 19:16 receiving one pound and increasing it into ten. The other "good and faithful servant" receiving the two talents and increasing them into four, as in Matt. 25:22, is the same one increasing one pound into five (Luke 19:18).

We have previously considered the significance of calling "ten servants" and giving each one pound, as also of the difference between the "pounds and talents," and the respective increase of both. But the matter of Matt. 25:14-15 in its bearings needs further consideration: "It is as a man travelling into a far country, who called His own servants, and delivered unto them His goods. And unto

one He gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability." The like numbers thus receiving the respective gifts of five, two and one talents at the departure of the Lord are the ones reckoned with at His return. Not any others living on earth at the era of His "shout" save these "three" have either talents or pounds. And for the era then ending, as in every previous portion of the age, the Divine cause comprises two sections. This agrees with the matter previously noted in regard to Matt. 25:7 having the significance of "three" and not "ten," as in verse 1. "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." Three communities comprise these.

Christ's perfect knowledge of everyone coming to Him for His gracious gift of "sonship"—"talent," and as a "labourer" receiving the "one pound," is expressed in the matter of Matt. 25:15: "He gave to one five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his several ability." The Apostles when coming to Christ for His gracious gift were all recognised by Him as "five talent servants" save one, as in John 6:70, and he was a first display with others mentioned of the "one talent servant digging and burying his talent in the earth." As in John 6:70 and early in His ministry Christ thus spake, "Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a false accuser." And in verse 66 of the same chapter there is reference to "many disciples" proving "one talent servants," and of their "going back" being a result which Christ had foreseen when they first came to Him.

The "many disciples" referred to in John 6:60, 64, 66, as being offended, murmuring, and "going back," are the same ones referred to in John 2:23-25 at their previous believing in Him: "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all. And needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man." This same "knowing" at first seeing the subject and which resulted in Christ fully "committing Himself" is the matter of John 1:46: "Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." In His parable of the Sower the differences be-

tween the "good and bad soils" as comparisons of the states "in man" are those of "good and honest heart" with the one, and with the other, "yet hath he not root in himself." A real responsive love within the heart, when first hearing of and receiving the loving gift of God, manifests "root in himself." In Ephes. 3:14 there is this further reference in regard to "root" within all five and two talent servants: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love."

It is by "knowing what is in man" that Christ can recognise the different servants of five, two and one talents when these first come to Him for His gift, and the ones which will prove "faithful." Moreover, the "several abilities" of these ones coming to Him (natural abilities given each by God) determine the future places in His work and the numbers of the "talents" given to each. Christ "knows" all those with natural "ability" to become "elders" in His work and use it for His glory if they will, as also of others not having this "ability" but that of another kind so necessary also in His work. Those coming to Christ with "ability" to become "elders" have deeper understanding of the loving purpose bound up in Him and in His "gift" than others equally sincere and true, but not having this particular "ability." This "ability" receives the "five talents."

Concerning the man who was to prove himself the "greatest of the Apostles," and before he entered on his life's service, the words of Acts 9:15 were spoken to a humble disciple of the "two talent" section of Christ's people: "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel." Christ knew what was in this man when giving him "five talents" according to the ability possessed, and that he would increase them into "ten talents," and the "one pound" also given him into ten pounds. The like "ability" obtains in the increase of talents and pounds into their respective "ten," as the different "ability" with two talent servants brings the increase of "four talents and five pounds." Being "faithful" accomplishes with the respective servants the different increase.

All five talent servants when called must become "elders" as proving being "faithful." They cannot be faithful save by receiving and using the five talents, as the others cannot be faithful save by receiving and using two talents. The gracious Giver determines these matters and not the privileged servants. He recognises the different "abilities" and knows which is to receive five talents and which are two talent servants. And He knows, too, that the responsive love expressed in the five and two talent servants at their first coming to Him will increase during the succeeding period of "growth" one hundred per cent. The one talent servant coming to Christ for His gift, by being "without root in himself," is influenced to come by another cause to that of 2nd Corinth. 5:14, and so cannot increase or "grow up" into two nor five talents, much less four and ten: "For the love of Christ constraineth us."

The words of Paul in 1st Corinth. 9:16-17 serve to make manifest the necessity for each faithful servant rendering that which marks their respective sections of five and two talents: "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel. For if I do this thing willingly I have a reward; but if against my will a dispensation is committed unto me." Paul must be a five talent servant or not any. He could not be a two talent servant and be "faithful." Not any of the section of two talents has "necessity laid upon them to preach the Gospel" like all of the five talent section have. This same matter is the one underlying the reference in Romans 10:14, 15 and with age-lasting operation: "And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" Hearing by the two talent section requires the preaching of the other section. And only those whom Christ "sends" can preach His Gospel of peace, as all these have the privilege and responsibility of five talent servants.

The beautiful words of the invitation to the "ten and four talent faithful servants" in Matt. 25:21-23 is apart from any use of "first and second" to them as obtains in the different regard in Luke 19:16-18. The one state of boundless "joy of their Lord" is entered by both. Another difference with the matter of the "pounds" and the

"talents" is that of Matt. 25:20-22: "And so he that had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, Lord, Thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more." In verse 22 there is the like order with the other "faithful servant." As previously considered, with the same two "faithful servants" in Luke 19:16-19 and their "coming and saying" in regard to the increased pounds, there is not the "bringing of the pounds" as there is of the increased "talents" in Matt. 25:20-22.

The increased "pounds" placed in the "bank" are well invested. But the increased "talents" must be with each "faithful servant" when hearing and later meeting their Lord. As already noted, this increase of one hundred per cent. in the "talents" is that of Ephes. 3:17-19: "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." During the course from first coming to Christ to the hearing of the verdict of His "Judgment Seat," there is with every constituent of the two sections of "faithful servants" a hundred per cent. increase of love for Him, "**growing up into Christ.**" A further explanation of this matter is presented in the Lord's words to the "wicked and slothful servant" at the bringing of the one talent given him, together with the one pound (as in Luke 19:20), recorded in Matt. 25:27, "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the **exchangers**, and then at My coming I should have received mine own with usury." "Exchangers" are also bankers, but banking deposits made and exchanging one form of money by another are different matters of business. The money or coinage of every country is only current there, and there is need for exchange when individuals are in other countries for the coinage of each with that in their possession.

"**Exchanging**" commences with first coming to Christ and receiving new money not current in any earthly country. The love of God and of Christ as bound up in the gracious gift offered on the sole requirement of faith is exchanged for an existing love. Here are the words of 1st John 2:15-16: "Love not the world, neither the things in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the

Father is not in him." The two loves cannot be in the same heart. The existing "love of the world and its things" must be exchanged for the new love to receive the "talents." But this is only the commencement. Increased understanding of the Divine love and purpose brings increased recognition of the extensive area of "the world and its things" not seen at first, and of how deeply rooted in human nature is "love of the world and its things." And one feature of world love which is hardest to "exchange" is that recorded as one prevailing order of these "last days" in 2nd Timothy 3:2: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves." Indeed there is imperative need for a period of time succeeding the first believing for the necessary "growing up into Christ," for placing the new money of the "talents" freely given each true believer with the "ex-changers" that the required increase of one hundred per cent. may be realised. More beautiful words as outlining the experiences and longings of a "faithful servant" in his life's "exchanging" could hardly be used than those of Philip. 3:7-8. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse that I may win Christ."

Section Two.

The wonderful application of these two Parables of the "talents and the pounds," in conjunction with the realisation of the "Parable of the Labourers," in its feature of "calling the last first," is now to be considered. The "calling" of the last labourers first, as in Matt. 20:8, is that of the speaking of the Lord to the two "good and faithful servants" as in Matt. 25: 21, 23; Luke 19:17, 19. The two matters of this address are spoken first in His "shout" and to the "**Angel and Church in Philadelphia**"—the living wise Virgins—the "last" called first. The same two matters are spoken again at His personal coming to the "many first" of His people of the Gospel Age. The "faithful servants" addressed in His shout comprise a "first and second," as in Luke 19:16, 18, as they do the "good and faithful servants" with the ten and four talents, as in Matt,

25:20, 22. The "many first" rising at His personal appearing also comprise a "first and second" far more numerous than the two of living Virgins, as they do the two sections of "good and faithful servants" with the ten and four talents respectively.

As considered in the previous section, the use of "first and last" in Matt. 20:16 and the "Parable of the Labourers" is to the people of Christ of the Gospel Age, designated in 1st Thess. 4:16-17: "The dead in Christ, and we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." Those referred to as "the dead in Christ" are the "first," and the "we which are alive and remain" are the "last" in the comparisons of Matt. 20:16. And in the order of meeting the Lord at His personal coming these "first" are to be first and these "last" are to be last, with a momentary interval between. The use of "first and last" in this regard the more makes manifest the use of "first and second" in Luke 19:16-18, and its dual application. The "first and last," as in Matt. 20:16, each comprises two sections, of "first and second," as each comprises the "ten and four" talent servants. This manifests the careful attention taken in the use of "second" with "first," in Luke 19:16-18, to avoid confusing with the "first and last" in the "Parable of the Labourers" in Matt. 20:16.

Another feature of careful arrangement is that of the momentary interval, between the raising of the dead in Christ first at Christ's personal coming, and the catching away from the earth of the "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." All these "we" are the ones addressed first and by Christ's shout in the beautiful words of approval recorded in the Parables of the "talents and pounds." These "we" are not again addressed in the same words of the Lord at their translation from the earth. But all the resurrected dead in Christ are addressed in exactly the same words previously spoken in His shout to living virgins and before these are translated from the earth. Thus Christ's shout is His speaking coming to the living "last," and to the two sections of "first and second" in this one community all over the earth. And Christ's later personal coming is also a speaking coming to the "first" of His people of the Gospel

Age and to the two sections of "first and second" in this vastly larger community.

In 1st Thess. 4:16 there is this exact prophecy of the Lord's coming for His people of the Gospel Age: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." This forecasted order requires connected Scriptures for its details. Apart from these other Scriptures it might be wrongly concluded that the "shout" is an association of the "trump of God," and that both transpire at the one personal coming. In a parallel reference in 1st. Corinth. 15:52, treating on the raising of the dead in Christ and the changing of living believers, there is mention only of the "trumpet," and which further confirms the truth of the "shout" having transpired previously. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." There is not any bringing in to this forecast of the "shout" as would be required if it had not taken place previously.

But neither of these exact forecasts gives any particulars as to that which is comprised in the "trumpet" and the "shout." In John 5:28-29, and in reference to the like raising of the dead as in 1st Thess. 4:16, 1st Corinth. 15:52, there is not any mention of "trumpet, last trump," but these words: "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." This forecast comprehends the two orders of resurrection—as in verse 29—and which other Scriptures reveal as 1000 years apart. The resurrection of Christ's people at His coming is the one matter of 1st Thess. 4:16, 1st Corinth. 15:52. But it is clear from John 5:28 that the speaking of Christ's voice in trumpet tones is the cause of resurrection, and is intended in the terms "trump of God, last trump." But the "shout" with the Archangel's voice has not—as already noted—any association with the raising of the dead in Christ, and so is not in any way connected with the speaking forecasted in John 5:28, but only the "trump of God, the last trump."

As briefly considered in the preceding section of this chapter, the "shout," as in 1st Thess. 4:16, is the same as the "cry of the Bridegroom" in the illustrative matter

of Matt. 25:6-7: "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." This, in accord with the illustrative material, is a summary rather than a detailed account of all that is comprised in the "cry," and does not even suggest the two totally different addresses to the two communities of virgins. The beautiful methods of inspiration compel appreciation from every thoughtful mind, and which are those of making each portion to be like a link in a chain, or like so many single diamonds set in a cluster and emitting their individual and collective light.

The great bulk of "the Parable of the Talents" in the same chapter as that of the virgins—Matt. 25:19-30—and the same of the "Parable of the Pounds"—Luke 19:15-27—are actually devoted to the exposition of the "shout" as in 1st Thess. 4:16, and the "cry" as in Matt. 25:6-7. Such is the importance of this speaking coming of the Lord as to call forth these two exquisite parables and the beautiful matter also in the "Parable of the Labourers" previously noted, as recorded in Matt. 20:8, 16. As already considered, the distinct but united relationships of "labourers and servants" make necessary the different parables of the talents and pounds, and also of the two parts of Christ's speaking to the two sections of His living people. And since the same matters of Christ's spoken verdict will be later addressed to the "dead in Christ" as they arise at His feet and to the "first and second" of that community, the two coming of Christ are united together in these two parables.

In both parables—of the talents and the pounds—as in that of the virgins, the present and past tenses are employed and not the future one. In verse 19, Matt. 25, there is the use of the present tense: "And after a long time the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." In verses 20, 22, 24 there is the respective use of "came and said" with the three servants. In verses 21, 23, 26 the Lord's speaking is in the past tense: "His Lord said unto him." The like methods obtain in the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:15-27. The future tense, with the use of the imperative "shall," is the one of exact prophetic forecasts, such as those of 1st Corinth. 15:51-52, 1st Thess. 4:15-17. This consideration brings to recognition

that the matters comprised in the message of Christ's shout to "faithful servants—the Angel and Church in Philadelphia"—will consist of the two of Matt. 25:21, Luke 19:17 blended together: "**Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord.**"

The very mention of such a message as this, entering into the delighted ears of everyone comprised in "the Angel and Church in Philadelphia" in all the lands of the earth, is almost overwhelming in its grandeur as in its immensity. And the materials of this "shout" thus addressed to the known living "faithful" ones have a remarkable likeness with that spoken to Noah and to his house on the day of entry into the Ark, as in Genesis 7:1: "And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the Ark; for thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation." It is to Christ's shout and its message to living believers that there is the intended parallel in "**So shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.**"

And the repeating of the same message as in the "shout" to the larger community of the "first" serves to manifest other features of contrasts. The "shout" to the living "faithful" brings the delighted entrance into "the joy of their Lord," but not into His "glory" nor into the two standings of "authority over cities." The speaking of the same message at Christ's personal coming to the large community of the "first" is at their entrance into His glory and the standing of "authority," shared also by the translated ones from the earth. Thus the expression of Christ's speaking, as in Matt. 25:21-23, is the one to living believers in His shout—"I will make thee ruler over many things"—while the matter of Luke 19:17-19 is the later expression spoken at His personal coming: "**Have thou authority over ten cities; be thou also over five cities.**"

But the invitation in the shout to each "faithful" one addressed—"Enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord"—is itself a new immensity beyond present apprehension. Christ's "joy" during the days of His flesh, defined in such Scriptures as Luke 10:21, was that of "rejoicing in spirit." This same deep and abiding joy is referred to in His farewell words in John 15:11: "**These things have I**

spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." And the first three of the constituents of the fruit of the spirit in every faithful believer, recorded in Galat. 5:22, are "love, joy and peace." But the resurrection of Christ and His entrance into glory brought to Him that "joy and gladness" referred to in many Scriptures, and which has this mention in Psalm 16:11: "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Present joy of heart with everyone entering into the glories of the Divine purpose in Christ and the anticipation of His coming is thus defined in 1st Peter 1:8: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Thus every "faithful servant" hearing Christ's shout enters at once into that texture of "joy" which is defined by Christ as "My joy," and in Psalm 16:11 as "fulness of joy." And this joy is the daily experience of each of these for the era of the "interval" and its final and marvellous services. In this equipment of Christ's living people all over the earth there is an intensification of that imparted at Pentecost to the "one hundred and twenty" in the upper room at Jerusalem. Apart from the Divine forecasts of the order of the final ending of the Kingdom of Heaven, opened at Pentecost in the remarkable associations recorded in Acts 2nd chapter, not any human mind could have conceived of its immensity and altogether marvellous happenings. The whole earth is to be the domain of this "closing the kingdom" and testifying to a wondering world of the fact.

Some incidental mention has been made in the consideration of the parables of the talents and the pounds, of the "unprofitable servant" spoken to in Christ's shout in very different terms to the speaking to the "faithful servants." Much more remains in this regard and to a full recognition of revealed truth in the same connection. A matter to be noted first, and which explains other features of the two parables, is that not any "unprofitable servants" are present or in any way associated with the speaking of Christ at His personal coming to the "first" of His people. This personal coming is to the "air" and a particular locality over the city of Jerusalem out of

human sight, and where He ascended to Heaven. Only at His "speaking coming—His shout"—is there the inclusion of others with His "faithful" people in being addressed by Christ at the era marked.

There is not any need to even refer to "unprofitable servants" during the long times of Christ's absence from the earth to His shout, in these parables, since all such when next they appear in life will be in the "terrestrial" inheritance and not in the celestial. There is not any necessity for any of these to appear before Christ at His personal coming for His faithful people of the whole age. At death all these were marked for missing the celestial glory to be imparted at His coming. But there is pressing necessity for living "unprofitable" servants at His shout and His later personal coming to be the subjects of His spoken verdicts. All these with the living generation of mankind have been the only privileged subjects of the offer of "exceptional redemption" of mankind of all human history. And this large universal community designated in Matt. 25:30 "the unprofitable servant" have been prominent before living mankind as the ones looking for the coming and kingdom of Christ.

Although this same "community" is referred to in the Parable of the Virgins as "foolish" (as differing with the name of the world of "wicked"), it is in this name of the world that Christ addresses them with the addition of "slothful," as in Matt. 25:26, "wicked and slothful servant." All distinctions between these and the world of unbelievers are gone at the time of this speaking. The name of the world is the one given them by Christ. And the addition of "slothful," which is only addressed to this community, further reminds them of neglected opportunity then ended, particularly available to them as professed "servants" of His. Even the use of "servants" in this address is in rebuke as well as that of "wicked and slothful."

The Divine estimate of even a professed faith in the coming of Christ which is mixed with the "traditions of men" made this one community of the religious world to be referred to as "virgins, servants," to the time of their rejection by Christ. From that time they are manifested to all others as the subjects of the severe verdict of Christ,

with an imposed service for the manifesting of Christ's approved people placed only on them and not on any others. It is only as the means of identity that there is the later use of "virgins" in Matt. 25:11 in application to this one community, and of their second and final rejection by Christ. "The other virgins" is the term used in this reference.

This Divine recognition of the difference brought by confessed belief in the coming of Christ, as previously considered, is responsible for the "shout" being directed to the ears of all "foolish virgins" as of those of all the "wise." Although all others of living adult mankind, save the people of Israel, have like responsibility to the "due truth" preparing for Christ's coming, Christ's shout is only to be spoken in the hearing of "wise and foolish virgins." And it is of these same ones only that there is their associated "speaking" to Christ with that of His "two faithful servants," and not of any others of living mankind, since these comprise the "third" to the "first and second."

The "coming and saying" of this one community of unfaithful servants recorded in Matt. 25:24, 25, Luke 19:20, 21, like that of the two sections of "faithful servants," has been in process during the era from His sign to His shout. As we noted with the "saying" of the two faithful servants so with that of the one unfaithful servant. Christ's approved living people would never conceive of saying to Christ the commendatory things credited to them, but which, in His estimate, their course during the era then ended had spoken to Him. There is need only to know human nature, and particularly religious human nature professing the Name and service of Christ, to be certain that the "sayings" recorded of the one "unfaithful servant" would never be spoken to Christ by human lips. Here is the matter of Matt. 25:24: "Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew Thee that Thou art an hard man, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where Thou hast not strawed. And I was afraid, and went and hid Thy talent in the earth; lo, there Thou hast that which is thine."

Those who have been saying these things for the era now present will not believe that they have, until Christ tells them in His shout. How many have been nauseated with the "hard" things said by these "servants" concern-

ing the Lord they profess to love, but only fear, will be manifest when the Lord comes. Every principle of justice and right known to man is outraged by the "hard" things presented by these professed "servants" with others of "the Synagogue of Satan," and cruelly miscalled "Gospel Preaching." Fear of consequences is the confessed motive of service to a "hard Lord" in the words of this "servant" thus recorded, "And I was afraid, and went and hid Thy talent in the earth." Love of earthly things is natural to man, and is "exchanged" for love of God, of Christ, of heavenly things, by the two "faithful servants." But to submerge the talent of "sonship" in the love of earthly things; to love the things of the world and seek its honours and rewards in spite of the professed belief of the fate awaiting those who do this, merits the Lord's strong rebuke and rejection.

Although the "saying and coming" of this servant is one, there is the need for distinguishing into two in the different regard of the talent and pound. The like "fear of a hard Master" is expressed in the saying of Luke 19:20, 21, and in regard to the use of the "pound," as in Matt. 25:24, 25, and the wrong use of the "talent," but with a different definition: "And another came, saying, Lord, behold here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin. For I feared Thee, because Thou art an austere Man." The difference between servants and labourers is that also between the hiding of the talent in the earth and keeping the pound laid up in a napkin with this unfaithful servant. In both of these injurious activities are indicated, and inactivity only in the regard of the talent and pound being given for purposes not realised.

The fact of this community of the "unfaithful servant" being one section of the "Synagogue of Satan," referred to in Rev. 3:9, testifies to the wrong activities in the professed "work of the Lord" during the era to His coming. The removing of both natural and infused "fear" from the minds of all desirous of being set free into full liberty has been the "work of the Lord" with the "faithful servants" during this era, and the accomplishment of the same as Acts 26:18 records of the ministry of the greatest of the Apostles: "To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of the adversary unto God."

The "unfaithful servant" has not co-operated in this "work," nor shared in deliverance from fear and the turning from darkness to light of all within it.

In two other references to "napkin" in John 11:42, John 20:7, there is the like significance of the covering of the face of the dead. In a third, and the rendering of the same word by "handkerchiefs" in Acts 19:11, 12, there is a very different use recorded to that of the "unfaithful" servant's pound: "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul. So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."

Unlike the "shout" in its message to the two "faithful servants" being succeeded by the speaking of the same at the personal coming of Christ to the larger community of His people, there is only the one speaking in its two parts to "unfaithful servants." This the more emphasises the fact of the verdict of Christ on living "unfaithful servants" being delivered to all of these by His "shout." Here then is the substance of Christ's speaking to all these in every land on earth, by the same "shout" that delivers His approval of all living "faithful servants"—the angel and church in Philadelphia. "Wicked and slothful servant" are its first words of address, succeeded with the combined matters recorded in this regard in the two parables, and in contrast with the opening address to the two "faithful servants" of "Well done, good and faithful servant."

The associated matters recorded in Matt. 25:28, Luke 19:24, with this speaking to the "unfaithful servant," are very striking and need careful attention to recognise their true significance. Here is the matter of Matt. 25:28: "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents." As revealed in Luke 19:24 this injunction is addressed to the faithful servants previously commended by the Lord: "And He said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds." Christ's spoken verdict to the "unfaithful servant" community rejects them from any part or lot amongst His people, but commits the taking of the talent and pound from the rejected ones to His people. In this commission they are referred to as "them that stood by." This is not any mere figure of speech.

Moreover, not any of the faithful servants addressed by the Lord in every land on earth hear His spoken verdict on the constituents of the bigger community in the same universal domain, but only His approving verdict to them. The commission to take the talent and pound from the other community marks the further speaking by the Lord in directing the course of His people in the universal service to be rendered by them. The designation of "them that stood by" is one of previous use to the people of God, both of the Old and New Testament times, and signifies their position before the world as His representatives, as maintaining His cause on earth. In Zech. 4:14 it is employed of the two leaders of the returned people of Israel from the captivity in Babylon, and their labours in the rebuilding of the Temple and instilling the worship and the service of Jehovah: "Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." These two were Zerubbabel the Prince and Joshua the High Priest.

The Divine cause on earth has been preserved in every generation of the Gospel Age by those who have "stood by" His Word and purpose. For the era to Christ's shout the two communities of "first and second" have "stood by" the "due truth" and its service of the Lord, but apart from any recognition by others on earth. The leaders and teachers of the large section of the religious world comprised in the "unfaithful servant" have been regarded as the authorised and qualified expositors of the truths of the Second Advent and the Divine Kingdom on earth. It is in this regard that there is to be the "taking" of the misused, talent and pound from the "unfaithful servant," and by the communities of the two "faithful servants — them that stood by."

It only requires recognition of the facts of this extraordinary "taking" by the approved living people of Christ, from the large community of the "unfaithful servant," to see another expression of "the last shall be first." Not any such commission could be given to any previous generation of Christ's people as the one of Matt. 25:28, Luke 19:24, and this is further isolated by the injunction: "And give it to him that hath ten talents, ten pounds." The tremendous significance of the "giving" to the ten talent servant of that taken from the rejected servant becomes mani-

fest from previous tracings. It is by the preached Word of Christ all over the earth that there will be the display of false teachings and false teachers to all mankind — the "taking from and giving to."

The commission to "them that stood by" to accomplish both the taking from and giving to, is a first authorising of the coming assemblies for worship, and the preached Word throughout the earth. Only by the universal exaltation of the truth through the manifestation of Christ's approved living people can this first commission given by the Lord be accomplished in its two features of "taking from and giving to." It is in this same regard that there is the particular use and application of the matter recorded in Matt. 25:29, Luke 19:26: "For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath, shall be taken away from him." This speaking to "them that stood by" is still future, and so is not either past or present in its application, but is a forecast of coming things, at the era marked.

The distinguishing of this forecast from a like reference spoken by Christ to the people of Israel ministered to by Him, and applying also to all later times down to His coming, is essential to "rightly dividing the Word of truth." It was in the associations of Christ's preaching the parables of the sower and the seed, and His quotations from the Prophets of the dense state of the listening people of Israel, that He spake the words of Matt. 13:12, in a then present application and to His own return. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." In succeeding verses of the chapter there is full explanation of the meaning of this "giving and taking away." All the people of Israel had the like opportunity of believing and receiving the beautiful truths and their gracious offer through Christ. But only the few disciples had earnest desire and longing to understand and receive.

In verse 15 there is this summary of the prevailing state in the listening people of Israel: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed." In verse 16 there is the commended different state in the listening disciples: "But blessed are

your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear." To the eager, anxious ones there was the continual "giving in abundance" of increased grace and truth. With those not anxious to understand, not seeking to be led, there was the gradual taking away of the privileged opportunity of obtaining that offered, and the going further into darkness. With the great majority of Israel it was true at the end of Christ's ministry that their "last state was worse than the first." The grace and truth freely offered them profited them nothing, and that which they had—privileged opportunity—was taken away from them when it was not availed of.

These differences of "giving and taking away" have been marked with every generation of mankind since the first century and never more so than during the present era. Those who are brought into touch with the beautiful "due truth" sent to make ready for Christ's coming, and gladly and eagerly embrace it, are the living expression of "to him shall be given and he shall have abundance." Those neglectful, not appreciative, not eagerly anxious to receive all that is provided and available are in process of losing that which they have—present opportunity. All "unfaithful servants" are thus comprehended in the matter of Christ's words in Matt. 13:12, with all faithful ones, as well as an indifferent world, in its definition of "giving and taking away."

But the forecast in Matt. 25:28, 29, Luke 19:24-26 can only apply at the time marked, and differs fundamentally with the matters in Matt. 13:12 obtaining for the Gospel Age. The past and present "giving in abundance" to all having the earnest longing desire to receive is not in any way at the expense or involving the loss of others not desirous of receiving. Taking away the opportunity of obtaining that which is offered but not appreciated is not the past or present service of those gladly accepting the gracious offers. And the making manifest of the distinct classes affected by the "giving and taking away" to all others of mankind around them, has not, and could not, be the order of the times ending with Christ's speaking His verdicts.

But all these are comprised in the forecasted "giving and taking away" by Christ's command in all the lands of

the earth. "And He said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. For I say unto you, That unto everyone that hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." Not any of the "first" of Christ's people could receive such a commission as this, nor have part with the "last" in its universal accomplishment.

The succeeding speaking to this in Luke 19:27 has reference to another class quite distinct from the community of the "unfaithful servant" referred to in verses 20-26. The spoken command of verse 27 will be considered in its place and connection later: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before Me."

The further instructing "them that stand by" in the matter of Matt. 25:30, presents for the first time in the Lord's speaking the designation of "unprofitable" to the rejected community of servants. In the Lord's verdict on these delivered by His shout "wicked and slothful servant" is the one employed: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." When it is realised that the "unprofitable servant" comprises a large community all over the earth, the "casting into outer darkness" of all these by the "them that stand by" can be recognised as a universal immensity. And in agreement with our previous tracing it can also be recognised that the community of the "unprofitable servant" is the only one to be thus "cast into outer darkness" shared by all others of living mankind. This "darkness" is the same as in Isaiah 60:2: "For, behold the darkness shall cover the earth, gross darkness the people."

But this community of the "unprofitable servant" have not only professed to have "light" on the subject of the Lord's coming and Kingdom, but have heard His spoken verdict of them, and thus know of His realised "speaking coming." Christ Himself "casts out" this community from any part in His Kingdom, but instructs His approved people to "cast them into outer darkness" prevailing, or "covering the earth and the people." The use of the like term of "outer darkness" and being "cast into it" in other

references and connections has in each case its own particular and revealed connections and subjects. The forecast, in Matt. 8: 11, 12, Luke 13:28, 29, is one example of a different "casting into outer darkness" of other subjects to that of the "unprofitable servant" in Matt. 25:30. The great bulk of the people of Israel of all generations of the present life are the ones referred to as the "Children of the Kingdom cast into outer darkness" at the era when they see "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the Prophets" in the Kingdom. The "casting out" of all these is that of their exclusion from the glory of administering the Kingdom, and into the subject state of the same Kingdom, which "state," by comparison with that of the Fathers, is one of "outer darkness." Thus the explanation of the "casting out into outer darkness" forecasted in Matt. 8:12 is in the parallel forecast in Luke 13:28: "You yourselves thrust out."

The "outer darkness" into which the "unprofitable servant" is to be cast by the "faithful servants" is that universally prevailing at the era of the Lord's shout, and exactly parallel with the "darkness" of the world at the entry into the Ark of Noah and his house. Here is the comparison and forecast of Matt. 24:37-39, with its dual uses of "so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be": "And knew not until the Flood came and took them all away." Universal unbelief in and ignorance of the coming of Christ and the coming of a visitation parallel with that of the Flood is the "outer darkness" which will only be dispelled by universal realisation through experience of Divine judgment. The state of the two "faithful servants"—the light of wonderful "due truth"—was easily possible with all others of living mankind, and which would have made non-existent the universal "outer darkness" and have covered the earth with light and praise.

The further matter of the forecast in Matt. 25:30 is in marked contrast with the state of "faithful servants" entering into the joy of their Lord, in defining the state of the "outer darkness" where the unprofitable are cast: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This description of the state of "outer darkness" at the era marked has manifest application first to the community of

the "unprofitable servant," and to all others later, when they "knew" by experience of the actualities then commencing. It is of the same state, but at the stage of events commencing with the taking of Christ's faithful people from the earth, that there is the application of Jeremiah 31:5-7: "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, and all faces are turned into paleness." It is imperative that the living world, privileged to have enjoyed the opportunity of "exceptional redemption," must learn of the right of their Redeemer to loving response to His offers of grace by severe experiences of His judgment for neglect and refusal. And it is in view of the later coming into the new creation in the lesser but abounding glory of "the terrestrial" that the living world, like that of Noah's days, is to "learn righteousness when His Judgments are in the earth," as in Isaiah 26:9.

The realising of Christ's instructions to His "faithful servants," in Matt. 25:30, "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness," is by and through the universal religious meetings conducted by them. And this commission, together with the other matters considered in the two Parables of the Talents and Pounds, the more disclose the compressed and condensed nature of the illustrative matter of Matt. 25:6, 7: "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." Only by the aid of the parables and pounds can we learn of the different messages of that "cry" to each company of virgins. And that the company of the "wise" comprises the two sections of "first and second," with the respective ten and four talents and ten and five pounds, also that the community of "foolish" bring back to the Lord an unused talent and pound.

The universal recognition of the "unprofitable servant" community by the "faithful servants" is another matter of the Parables of the Talents and the Pounds, in the instructions to "cast them into outer darkness." But here again we are led to recognise the wonderful methods of the Divine Word by the revealed order of enlightening the "wise" concerning the "foolish," as in Matt. 25:8, 9.

In this illustrative matter there is revealed that the "foolish—unprofitable" are also enlightened by Christ as to who the wise are, and that the "foolish," in recognising all the living wise, speak first to them: "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out." It might easily appear from the matter just noticed (the instructing of the faithful servants to "cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness") that the wise speak to the foolish—unprofitable—first. But this is not the revealed order.

The shock coming to all "foolish virgins" when they hear Christ's shout in its message to them; the "weeping and gnashing of teeth" resulting from the knowledge of their real standing, are features, with others, bound up in the first speaking of the "foolish to the wise." Never previously did these foolish know their real standing in Christ's sight, nor that of the real "wise virgins" then made known to them by Christ. For the first time in their religious experience, and in spite of their previous exhorting of others of eternity and the necessity of being prepared, "foolish virgins" have their first realisation of eternal things when hearing Christ's shout and its verdict on them.

And this sudden bringing of eternal things from the speculative into the terribly real with all these will be all the more distressing because of not knowing, not understanding the glorious truths of the Divine Word. The very worst that could happen these and all other devotees of false doctrine would be that their beliefs and teachings were true. Nothing could be worse for "foolish virgins" than to find that their hard, cruel estimates of Christ, believed and preached to others during the present era, were true. If Christ is the "hard Master" that their teachings present, what can they expect from Him when He addresses each in the words "Thou wicked and slothful servant"?

But this consideration of the "unprofitable servant" community as the "third" to the two of Christ's faithful people makes necessary the right understanding of the place and significance of another parable not previously referred to in our studies. "The Parable of the Steward," recorded in Matt. 24:45-51, Luke 12:42-48, is this "other," and which comprehends the Gospel Age in its scope, with

particular application to the era ending at the Lord's coming. Unlike the Parables of the Talents and of the Pounds, this one of the "Steward" and to the era of the Lord's coming concentrates on the one class of "stewards," and which "one class" is the same as the ten talent and ten pounds servant of the other parables. As already noted, there is not any "first and second" in the community of the "unprofitable servant," so there is not reference to this community in the "Parable of the Steward."

This parable is not grouped with the two others of the talents and pounds, but supplies that which could not be presented in them. Of necessity these two parables, in presenting the one servant out of three as proving "unprofitable," could not also reveal any "falling away" of any constituents of the communities of "first and second"—ten and five talent servants. Moreover, the one use of "unprofitable" to this community does not involve or include the matter of "falling away" from a previous approved standing, such as obtains in the "Parable of the Steward," and in the regard of the era to the Lord's coming. This is the matter in Luke 12:45: "But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

It is in the like regard of the era of the Lord's coming that there is the mention in the same parable of other servants, and of their receiving "few or many stripes" for being unfaithful. It is readily manifest that the "first and second faithful servants" of the Parables of the Talents and the Pounds are not the same as this "steward" and the servants needing "stripes few or many" for being unfaithful. But it is equally so that the steward and unfaithful servants of this parable, at the Lord's coming, are not of or included in the particular community of the "one talent servant," designated the "unprofitable servant" in Matt. 25:30. These are not amongst the "foolish virgins" of the Parable of the Virgins, as they could not be made manifest amongst the "wise" of the same parable. "Falling away,"

as with the steward and these particular servants, is from a previous standing which was an approved one.

It is clear from these tracings that the "Parable of the Steward," in its section treating on the era ending at the Lord's coming, refers to some comprised in the "Angel and Church in Philadelphia" who "fall away" and are rejected at the Lord's coming. Here is the force of the words in Matt. 24:51, Luke 12:46: "And will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." This "steward" will be included amongst the "enemies" referred to in Luke 19:27, destroyed on the day of Christ's coming. The "stripes" visited on the other servants referred to in the same parable, and because of their being unfaithful, mark their experiences succeeding their rejection. The "portion" of these, including that of the steward, ought to have been with the "two faithful servants"—the wise, since they were previously amongst them. These will share with "foolish virgins" in hearing Christ's shout and its verdict.

Loss of assurance as to the certain and impending coming of the Lord is presented as the first stage of "falling away," as in Luke 12:45: "If that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming." It only requires remembrance of the facts of the present era, so fully considered in our studies, to recognise how justly Christ estimates such a "saying in the heart" of any enlightened believer, particularly a "steward" or preacher. It appears almost incredible that any servant seeing Christ's dual sign and believing its associated "due truth," could become uncertain as to the "coming quickly" promised to Philadelphians at any succeeding stage. But Christ's words in this parable the more impress the need for the exhortation in the same "message to Philadelphians" recorded in Rev. 3:11: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." Every day since Christ's sign appeared ought to increase the confidence and intensify the longing of every Philadelphian in regard to the Lord's coming, as, indeed, it does with everyone undivided in heart.

Every one of the "ye" addressed by Christ in Luke 21:28-31 seeing and believing Christ's dual sign when it appeared in 1930, anticipated His speedy coming. At that

stage it appeared as if nothing intervened to cause any further delay. It was not then manifest to these "ye" that the days were parallel with the "days of Noah," and that all the world was to be tested in regard to "exceptional redemption," and brought amenable to exceptional judgment for neglected opportunity. Not any were "ready" at the appearing of Christ's sign. The necessity for understanding the "due truth" of the final era; for getting the victory over the beast and over his image and over the number of his name, obtained with everyone being prepared for Christ's coming. With the approved "ye" at the appearing of Christ's sign, as with Noah and his wife at the parallel era, the times succeeding provide the fullest test to faith and obedience in bringing the offer of a "redemption" not previously offered or possible.

If the "steward and other servants" referred to in the "parable" in Luke 12:42-48 were among the "ye" seeing Christ's sign, and addressed in the words "Your redemption draweth nigh," or if they believed the "sign" later, is not manifest, although their approved first state and standing is. And this "first state" marked them as "five and two talent" servants, and not among the "one talent" or "foolish virgin" community. The fact of the failure of servants with five or two talents; of being among the "wise" and proving unfaithful, could not be presented in the Parables of the Talents, Pounds, Virgins, but only in the particular one of "the steward." And in this one parable the era to the Lord's coming, and not the longer one preceding, is the one of the display of these unfaithful servants saying in their hearts: "My Lord delayeth His coming."

The results of this "saying of the heart" recorded of the "steward" are those of "beating the men-servants and maidens, eating and drinking with the drunken, and being drunken." Loss of certainty as to the impending coming of the Lord has the inevitable result of an arrogant spirit and association with the drunken state outside of the Philadelphian state. In "eating and drinking with the drunken" there is not with this "steward" and his associated servants any denial of the fact of the Lord's coming, as there is with the ones referred to in 1st Thess. 5:3 with the "peace and safety" cry. But the belief and teaching of an indefinite,

delayed, uncertain coming of the Lord, such as is indicated in the words, "My Lord delayeth His coming," marks falling away from the standing of Philadelphians and association with the "drunken" state of all others.

In the Parable of the "Sower," as in those of the Talents and the Pounds, there is indicated that "good soil" always produces approved fruitage of the three textures of thirty, sixty or an hundredfold. The fact of those with "the several abilities" to become five and two talent servants, not increasing these into ten and four, but proving unfaithful, is not in conflict with the order obtaining with "good soil." Ability to understand marks the five and two talent servants in differing degree, but is not limited to them, and is one with other requisites equally important. A loving as well as an understanding heart is essential, or, as in Matt. 13:21, "Having root in themselves." It is in the same regard that 1st Corinthians 13:2 subordinates all gifts, faith and knowledge to the possession of "love," quite apart from any reducing of these as essentials.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and knowledge; and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." Good soil has both depth and this essential "root" from which all growth proceeds. Moreover, all "growth" and fruit-bearing calls for, as it manifests—in the regard considered—patience and continuity, as in the beautiful definition in Luke 8:15: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." Having once laid hold of the "blessed hope" to be realised at Christ's glorious appearing, all "good soil" believers retain that hope and daily grow stronger as that "appearing" draws nearer and nearer.

In the Parables of the Talents and the Pounds there is Christ's estimate beforehand of the certainty of the five and two talent servants being alive on the earth and approved by Him at His coming. This is the same as in His address to the "ye" in Luke 21:28-31, and the "thou" in Rev. 3:7-11. Christ knew what was in every constituent of these, and fully "committed Himself" in regard to them, and will confirm this with each at His shout. But a particular sec-

tion of the "Parable of the Steward" was required for displaying that which could not be included in the other parables and forecasts. Not all included in "the angel and Church in Philadelphia" during the era to His shout could be amongst the commended ones. It is by the same "knowing what is in man" that the forecast of these exceptions was given, with the explanation of the causes of five and two talent servants becoming rejected as unfaithful.

Section Three.

The matter of Matt. 25:8 contains much in its few words for detailed consideration, aided by the wonderful features gathered from the Parables of the Talents and the Pounds: "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out." The universal area of this speaking is to be recognised as a first immensity. The fact of all the "foolish" knowing all the "wise" in all lands, and that they possess that which is solicited, is another immensity. Previous to hearing Christ's shout, the "foolish" regarded themselves as the "wise," and as in possession of fulness of light and truth, and the others were regarded as far from "wise," where they were in any way known or recognised. Christ's shout brings vividly to the recognition of all "foolish virgins" that His estimate of who comprise His people is the only correct one.

It is one thing to profess His name and service, and another to be confessed by Him as "good and faithful" when He speaks from Heaven. It is one thing to be ordained by men to preach His Gospel, and another to be commended by Him as having preached that Gospel in all its purity and beauty. Christ's own Voice from Heaven to the living communities of "wise and foolish settles all controversy as to the numbers and standing of His true people, and makes them known in every land on earth to rejected "foolish virgins." Thus, to read of the "wise virgins" being known and appealed to by the "foolish" is to be brought in close touch with a universal result of Christ's speaking from Heaven.

This "making known" on earth and to all mankind who are the true people of God is a matter of Christ's forecast, previously noted, in the regard of all the faithful Fathers and Prophets of the times to Christ's appearing in

flesh, as in Matt. 8:11, 12, Luke 13:28, 29. And this manifestation of the "elders" in the glory of the Kingdom is one expression of the forecast of Malachi 3:16-18: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." But this same forecast has dual application to Christ's people of the Gospel Age, and their being made manifest to a wondering world. And of this "duality" that of the "last being the first" is the order to be observed, and in fulfilment of the Parable of the Labourers, which has received previous consideration. The one purpose of "calling the last labourers first" is that of making them manifest to living mankind.

The New Testament contains several other definite forecasts in the like regard of manifesting Christ's people of the Gospel Age to the human race as a highly important feature of the Divine purpose. Amongst the many beautiful matters spoken by Christ to His Apostles at the "Last Supper" there is the one of John 17:23, and in the regard of future manifestation to the world: "I in them and Thou (the Father) in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved Me." These two marvellous matters are to be fully made manifest to the world—first, that the Father sent Christ into our world; second, that the Father has loved the manifested people of Christ with the like texture of love as He loves His beloved Son, "the Beloved." Only the Divine mind could conceive of these manifestations to the human race on the earth, and arrange and reveal the means of their realisation. In Romans 8:19 there is another forecast in this regard.

"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God." This is altogether remarkable in revealing how there is implanted in every member of the human "creation" a longing for this "manifestation." In Haggai 2:7 there is a parallel reference save that it refers to one Person, and the other refers to a plurality. But in this difference there is perfect harmony since the two are inseparable: "And the desire of all nations shall come." This "waiting," as in Rom. 8:19, and "desire," as in Haggai 2:7, is that of unconsciously but earnestly yearning for the matter referred to, even apart

from rightly knowing what is the reality "yearned" for. Every human being has ardently desired some better thing to come than anything provided in the present order of things. And this "better thing" hoped for is actually that of the "manifestation of the Sons of God," and which has as its cause and central glory the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in His glory."

Other forecasts treat upon this central matter as the key feature of the "manifestation of the Sons of God." In Colossians 3:4 there are these words, with the two adverbs of time as outstanding matters: "**When** Christ, who is our life, shall appear, **then** shall ye also appear with Him in glory." The two appearings are inseparably united; that of Christ's and the "appearing" of His people. In other references this "manifestation" of Christ and His people is spoken of as a "glorifying." In Romans 8:17, "That we may be glorified **together**," has this manifestation in view, as well as the sharing of Christ's nature by all His people, as also 2nd Thess. 1:10: "**When** He shall come to be glorified in His saints."

This "coming to be glorified in His saints" is a personal coming, and which includes all His saints of the Gospel Age in His nature and glory. But His "**speaking coming**" brings the "glorifying" of the "last" of His people, as the exceptional arrangement in the ending of the "great salvation" of this age. The "last are to be first" in being "glorified—manifested" as Sons of God to the world witnessing the signs of Christ's coming. The manifesting of the "last labourers" to living humanity as Christ's proved people of the era then ended is a first "glorifying" of these while they are in the flesh, **before men**.

Here, then, is the matter of Matt. 25:8, and of "foolish virgins" knowing and appealing to the known "wise," as marking the commencement of the "manifestation of the Sons of God." The succeeding "interval" to Christ's personal coming is for the completion universally of this "manifestation" commencing with that to "foolish virgins." This brings a wonderful display of "So the last shall be first, and the first last," as in Matt. 20:16. Not even the Apostles, nor early Christians, nor the saints and martyrs of Jesus of the Dark Ages, can be permitted to

have part in this first "manifestation of the Sons of God." Christ makes known to all "foolish virgins" of their real standing in His sight, and then enlightens them concerning His living approved people. This first making known of His "faithful servants" to the unfaithful ones, not only contains full information on these two matters, but includes that of using these first notified ones as His means of commencing universal knowledge of the "manifestation." Notifying "foolish virgins" is but the beginning.

In this regard, as in the several others considered, there is the necessary further elaboration in connected Scriptures, to that of the illustrative matters in Matt. 25:8, 9 of the speaking of the "foolish to the wise" after and as the result of Christ's shout. In a previous section we have considered the message to "Philadelphia" in its bearing on the era to Christ's shout. The "interval" succeeding and its operations has important and enlightening mention in the same message and in the wonderful forecast in Rev. 3:9. The mention in this of "the Synagogue of Satan" previously considered has connection with this particular reference to one section of that "Synagogue." The verse has the becoming use of "behold" as its first word, with a second use of the same word later, thus emphasising its very remarkable matter: "Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

In this there is further confirmation of our previous considerations as to those comprised in this "Synagogue" at the era marked—of Christ's shout. The particular feature mentioned of the one section referred to as the subject of the "making" is that of their claim to be "Jews," and in this of being the only section making such claim and of being identified by it. And this claim by the only section making it is declared as a "lie" and not any mere mistake or error of judgment. "Which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie." At that era the remarkable matter of a universal "Synagogue" in which there are not any Jews, and only one section of it falsely claiming to be Jews, is the truth stressed. This mark of identification is one of the section referred to as "foolish" as in Matt. 25:2, 3, 8, and of the same community. The claim to be

Jews is a religious claim and manifested as a "foolish" one by the words, "And are not, but do lie." This claim is as foolish as that of having a lamp designed to light the way to meeting the Bridegroom, and taking no oil with them, as in Matt. 25:3. Only those doing the one would do the other, not any other sections of the Synagogue do either. Not any of these were expecting Christ's return during the era then ended, nor making the religious claim to be Jews.

All those referred to in Rev. 3:9 as making profession to be Jews must be Gentiles by birth, otherwise they would not "lie" when saying that they were Jews. Not any Jew "lies" by claiming to be that which he was born; and whether true or false to the faith of their fathers makes no difference to that conferred by birth, even though it does to the standing in eternal life. The serious character of this false religious claim by Gentiles is stressed by Christ in His designating it as a "lie." It makes the Word of God of none effect, both in its forecasts of the Divine purpose with the one Israel, and the Divine purpose with the Gentiles. Birth, and not faith, determines both Jews and Gentiles. A believing Gentile no more becomes a Jew as the result, than a believing Jew becomes a Gentile. Instead of it being true, as foolish virgins affirm to be the case, that faith in Christ introduces into a new Israel, the truth is that all of the one Israel cease to be Jews, as believing Gentiles cease to be Gentiles, by faith in Christ Jesus. This is the glorious truth revealed and stressed in Galat. 3:28; Coloss. 3:11. A more glorious Name even than the honoured one of Israel is conferred upon Christ's people; all these are "accepted in 'The Beloved,' a Name above every other name."

Faith makes "children of God," and not children of Israel; natural birth makes the latter. There is, of course, only the one Israel, the descendants of the faithful Fathers. And that one is referred to in Galatians 6:16 as in all other references to "Israel," and distinguished from others referred to in the same verse: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

In the illustrative matter in Matt. 25:1-12, of necessity there is the associating together of the only ones on earth believing the "One Hope" of Christ's return, and of distinguishing these into two communities of wise and foolish.

Not any others save these two are introduced into the illustrative matters. But in Rev. 3:9, and at the end of the era to Christ's shout, other comparisons and contrasts are presented. The "Synagogue of Satan" in its last state is presented in contrast with faithful Philadelphians, and in this comparison "foolish virgins" are presented as one of its sections, and identified in this regard by its foolish Israelitish theory. In this verse and the connecting of the "foolish virgins" with the Synagogue of Satan, by declaring them to be "of it," there is the revealing of the declared "making" as only applying to them, and not to the other sections, nor to the "world" contrasted with Philadelphians in verse 10: "Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; Behold I will make them to come and worship at thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." As revealed in Matt. 25:6-8, "foolish virgins" with Christ's true people are the only ones of living mankind hearing Christ's shout.

It is on this account that Rev. 3:9 presents the same ones as being the only section of the religious world (Synagogue of Satan) as the subjects of the Divine "making." Moreover, the "making" of this verse is the same matter as that of Matt. 25:8 immediately succeeding Christ's shout: "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out." From this it might easily appear that this speaking is spontaneous, but Rev. 3:9 reveals that it is compulsory, and that it would not take transpire apart from this "making." It is on account of foolish virgins professing to believe and to be watching for the Lord's coming that they are referred to as "virgins," and that they hear Christ's shout. And in turn they have this isolated experience from all others that they may be the ones to make appeal for the first "manifestation of the Sons of God" to the "last" of these of the Gospel Age, and truly a remarkable first.

These "foolish virgins" of all sections of the religious world, by professing to be "Second Adventists," should have gladly received "the Word of His patience" and welcomed the new "open door." Their neglect, not to mention their opposition to the "due truth" and serious false teachings of the Divine purpose of Christ's return and Kingdom,

is the most inexcusable of living mankind. It is therefore becoming that they should be isolated amongst "adversaries," both in hearing Christ's shout and in being "made" to come to the approved people of Christ and solicit their assistance, and thus realise the first manifestation of the approved people of Christ.

"Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet" is the second mention of this remarkable "making" in the same verse, each prefaced by the arresting word "behold." Of a truth this order of "making" was utterly impossible of operation at any time of the whole Gospel Age to the era of its taking place at Christ's shout, as every thinking mind must recognise after consideration of its definition. Of necessity the very opposite order has obtained during the same long time. For this "long time" of Christ's absence in Heaven He has not made anyone on earth to worship either before or away from His own people. Neither has Christ made known either in part nor fully His estimate of His own people to others. The matter of 1st John 3:1 has had unchanging and compulsory application down to the era of His shout and on the earth, as that of 2nd Timothy 2:19 has had for the same long time in Heaven. The first reference reads: "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not"; the second one reads, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." This does not in any way interfere with these also "knowing."

If the world did know, then there would not be any necessity for forecasting and stressing the "manifestation of the Sons of God" in the associations of Christ's coming. Moreover, the order of "worship" instituted by Christ Himself, as in John 4:23, was and still is, altogether apart from any element of compulsion such as is forecasted in Rev. 3:9. These are the words of Christ spoken to the woman of Samaria: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him." Neither the Father nor Christ would, previous to the era of Rev. 3:9, either authorise or accept compulsory worship or that defined in Matt. 15:8 as "drawing nigh with the lips where the heart is far from Him."

It is absolutely certain that, apart from the "making to come" of the ones referred to in Rev. 3:9, they would not come to the ones addressed, either to "worship" or to seek information and help in regard to Divine truth. Every day of the present era has proved this to every constituent of the Church in Philadelphia, and particularly to the "angel" section of that Church. Few professed "Second Adventists" have shown any desire or anxiety to hear the truths of the "open door," even when those truths have been almost thrust upon their attention by preaching or by the printed page. If, indeed, all professed Second Adventists in every land on earth are to hear Christ's shout, as they are, then an inseparable association of this compulsory hearing is that of: "Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." The magnitude of this coming by Divine making, even in its first expression with universal communities of "Second Adventists," is so immense as almost to stagger the mind when first apprehending it.

How or in what form of expression this "making" obtains with every living constituent of the universal "Second Advent Movement" can be safely left to the One who promises to realise it to the full. The difference between the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven at Pentecost to living Israel, and the succeeding carrying out of Christ's commission to the Apostles recorded in Matt. 28:19, was that of a coming with the one and "going" with the other. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations" was the appointed order succeeding that of the coming to the Preacher at Pentecost, of an immense audience which was, as in Acts 2:5-11, of "Jews, devout men out of every nation which is under Heaven." There was not any need for the Preacher with the "key" of the Kingdom in his possession to go to the first invited nation of Israel. The representatives of living Israel then on earth came to the Preacher, by direct but unconscious Divine influence, and not by known "making," such as Rev. 3:9 forecasts in the final closing of the same Kingdom.

For the era of the "open door" there has been the "going" in search of those willing to listen to the most glorious message ever preached on the earth, and com-

prising the most wonderful and gracious offer of Divine Grace ever placed before mankind. Exceptional redemption never previously offered to mankind, on the sole requirement of accepting it by believing and "keeping the Word of His patience," has been "going forth to all nations" for the years since Christ's sign appeared. Christ's "shout" introduces the changed order of "coming," commencing with all living "foolish virgins," but not ending with their coming. Their coming is indeed an immense matter, but is the universal cause of a greater immensity of "coming." Only with the coming, which is the cause of that far greater than itself, is there the need for and fact of, "Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet."

It is this cause which is responsible for universal religious meetings without any parallel in past human history, and which realise when fully completed the first "manifestation of the Sons of God" to a living world. Only the one "object lesson" in the days of Noah presents any likeness with this "manifestation." For the seven days of that "interval," those in the Ark were the centre of universal interest and wonder. But even this one likeness was small by comparison with that of the "interval" succeeding Christ's shout, since the whole earth, and not only one part, is the domain of this "manifestation," and all "that dwell upon the earth" affected by it. The different orders of "going and coming" were marked in the "object lesson" in the "days of Noah." For the whole of the preceding era of 120 years, Noah, by his preaching, had been "going" to all the world appealing for their faith and obedience to the dual words of God. But for the seven days' "interval" there was not any further "going" on Noah's part, but of "coming" on the part of the world to Noah.

We have already noted how the "shout"—or midnight cry, as in the illustrative matter of Matt. 25:6-8—gives Christ's spoken verdict to the "foolish" as to the "wise virgins" as to their standing in His sight. Also that Christ enlightens the "foolish" as to who the wise are, and that this is of necessity as universal as the two classes of "virgins" are. The seeking and speaking to the "wise by the foolish" and not the reverse order, illustrated in Matt.

25:8, is that of Rev. 3:9 and of its dual "making to come." But only by learning of the revealed purpose of this compulsory coming, and of the particular form of the "coming," is there full understanding of Christ's words. "Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet" is further exposition of the matter of Matt. 25:8 in the address to Philadelphians in Rev. 3:8: "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out." This illustrative asking is responsible for the providing of opportunity, to "worship before the feet" of the manifested people of Christ.

The universal coming by compulsion and asking is not that of private interviews with individuals, such as Nicodemus sought "by night" with Christ, as in John 3:1, 2. It is illustrated more correctly by the eager multitudes seeking for Jesus to preach to them the Word of God, in public assemblies, as recorded in Mark 1:37, "All seek for Thee." All the immense meetings conducted by Christ, in "desert places, the mountain side, on the sea coast," presented the most wonderful expression of "worship before the feet." Never were there such "feet" as His, so "beautiful and peaceful, shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace," as in Ephesians 6:15. The forecasting, in Rev. 3:9, of "Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet" has the powerful significance of meetings for worship, and through which there is to result the "manifestation of the Sons of God."

This definition of "before thy feet" is employed in other Scriptures in the associations of the preached Gospel brought by God's messenger. In Romans 10:15, and in the regard of the Divine service of the Gospel Age, the matter is quoted from Isaiah 52:7, and another phase of the same "service." It is also connected with the previous verse, and its mention of the necessity for "preachers" and of these being sent by the Lord: "As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." It is not only that the "feet" carry the messenger with the "glad tidings of good things," but also the associations of delivering the message in the midst of eager listeners, that make the "feet beautiful." It is not any wonder that in forecasting this

unique experience of the "last" of His people in the flesh there is the twice use of "behold," as also of the twice use in the like regard of "I will make them to come."

"The One that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of the David," has the right to accomplish this fore-
casted dual "making" of the large community referred to. This right is that of ownership of all men, and not only that of having "all power." All men are His purchase; they belong to Him by right of His redeeming sacrifice, so that, as declared in Romans 14:8, 9, it is true, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that He might be Lord **both of the dead and the living.**" Not any of the various sections of the "Synagogue of Satan," including that of "foolish virgins," know of this ownership of all men by Christ, nor of His methods of "making them to come and worship" as He approves and appoints. A favourite theory with all these, and which is true in its proper application, is that of "human free agency" in all matters of future destiny and in worship and Divine service.

But all these "sections" of the universal "Synagogue" are to learn by experience of Divine methods previously unknown to them, and contrary to their previous beliefs and teachings. And the particular one marked with the false theory of "spiritual Israel" from the others, even in sharing the false doctrines held by all, and the opposition to "the Word of His patience," is to be the particular subject of Divine compulsion to "**come and worship.**" This section of all others has made loud professions of "worshipping" in the truths of the Lord's coming. Not any of the other numerous "sections" even entertain the "Second Advent" as an article of faith, or the Divine Kingdom on earth administered by Christ from one new centre, as either true or desirable. There is need for all these to learn, and not only the one section, of Christ's estimate of them and their teachings in His Name, and to learn also what He meant in His words in John 4:23: "The true worshippers shall worship the Father **in spirit and in truth.**" Worship is only possible and acceptable when in these.

Here, then, is the matter of universal meetings for the full exposition of the truths of the "open door" (then shut to), "the Word of His patience," by "the angel of the Church in Philadelphia," surrounded by the proved constituents of that "Church" during the era then ended. These "meetings" are solicited by the communities of "foolish virgins" through Divine compulsion, but of necessity are all arranged by the One who appointed them, and Who compels the presence of their first audiences. Only He could arrange and appoint these.

Together with the dual "making"—to come and to worship—there is the third, of the last clause of Rev. 3:9: "And to know that I have loved thee." As we have considered Christ makes known to each of these "thee" His love for them when speaking His verdict in His "shout" from Heaven, of their course of patient and faithful "keeping" during the previous era. And for the "interval" succeeding His shout, each of these "thee" is reveling in "the joy of their Lord" in accord with His invitation to "enter it," and previous to their entering into the "glory of their Lord." But it is one thing for Christ to tell His people of His love for them, and another to make others know "That I have loved thee." But this making known to some others, and through them to all others, of the Divine love for Philadelphians, is the first realisation of Christ's words spoken at the Last Supper, previously noted and recorded in John 17:23: "And that the world may know that Thou (the Father) hast loved Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Christ loves those whom the Father loves, and for the same cause of "keeping the Word of His patience" to His speaking from Heaven, for the era of the "open door."

Only these "last" of His people, and not any of the many "first," are the privileged ones of this first making of others, "to know that I have loved thee," and to have the particular associations of the era to His coming for manifesting their love for Him, which the "many first" had not. The later making known to the world of the Father's love for Christ's people, and of the Father's sending Christ, during the Millennial Age and in the new creation, will be shared by the whole of His people, the "first

and the last." Since it is gloriously true that "God is love," that Christ proved the Father's and His own universal love by dying for and redeeming all to certain eternal life, then the particular love referred to in Rev. 3:9 has a particular cause first referred to by Christ in the words of John 16:27: "For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God." Only those thus learning to love Christ and to believe in His **Heavenly Personality** can share in the particular "love" referred to in John 16:27, and which is the same as in Rev. 3:9: "And to know that I have loved thee."

And in John 14:21 Christ explained wherein love to Him consists: "He that hath My Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." The only ones thus "keeping" Christ's Word to the era ending at His "shout," both of "the Word of His patience" and of His comparisons and forecasts in the regard of the days of Noah, are the ones of His mention in Rev. 3:9. His making known to compulsory worshippers of **His** love for these others of His people is proof of their manifested love for Him in their previous "keeping" of His Word. Not any others of living mankind during the same era had proved their love for Christ, and so were excluded with the compulsory ones told of His estimates, from any part in that particular love of God and of Christ.

The "making known that I have loved thee" to the compulsory worshippers is an altogether remarkable matter without any previous illustration in the experience of Christ's people. And this further reveals the "remarkable" character of "worshipping before thy feet." These assemblies for "worship" will accomplish the making known of Christ's love for Philadelphians to the others, and so will be unique in the history of mankind. Not any such result obtained even during the glorious times in Jesusalem marking the early days of the Christian Church, and when miracles and wonders were the daily order. In this same regard there is in Acts 4:33 this mention: "And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." But even this was far below the matter of "I will make them to know that I have loved thee."

The coming assemblies for "worship" will have such "grace" resting on the privileged "last" of Christ's people, as was impossible with any of the "first." An irresistible influence will pervade them from Christ Himself, compelling all listeners to the glorious message to "know" His loving estimate of the messengers. And there is need only for reading the records of Apostolic times concerning the "lifting up of the voice" of the preachers in the easy hearing of vast numbers of listeners, for a pattern in this regard during the coming "worship before thy feet." The audience present from "every nation under Heaven" at the opening of the Kingdom at Jerusalem and by Peter's preaching, together with the residents of the land, conceivably numbered some millions. But when Peter, as in Acts 2:14, "lifted up his voice," that voice reached the ears and minds of every one of the audience, without need for mechanical transmitters, or danger of not being heard. Wonders, if not "miracles," will be the associations of the coming "worship."

The fact of this "worship" taking place in every land on earth, and of the total numbers of approved Philadelphians conducting and associated with it, being those of Rev. 14:3—144,000—presents many matters for earnest consideration. Some centres, like as in European countries, are much more thickly populated and nearer together than others, such as in Australia. It is possible that Philadelphians are more numerous—in proportion to the numbers of others—in some lands than in others, and so may be required to minister in centres away from their own home lands. Some centres of the earth may not even have any approved ones in their midst, and so require to be ministered to from without. The fact and necessity for the "worship" being simultaneous in its commencement, and ending in every land on earth, is fundamental, as also of the limited time of the "interval" being fixed by Divine arrangement to exactly suit His requirements.

Although exceptional in the wonderful days of the Apostles, such matters as in Acts 8:39, 40, and in the experience of Philip, disclose Divine methods of economy in time and of overcoming distances when these were required. "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit

of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more. . . And Philip was found at Azotus; and passing through he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea." There are not any obstacles to the realisation of the Divine purposes, and He is not in any way dependent upon human facilities of any kind in His service. It only needs a "Thus saith the Lord" for humble faith to know that what He has promised He will perform. "Faith laughs at impossibilities."

It is involved in Rev. 3:9 that the ones "made to come and worship before thy feet" comprise the majority if not all the audiences of the first series of assemblies. And all these are eager to enter into the "worship" and to understand the profound themes expounded. But these compulsory worshippers all over the earth are only the first "third" of the immense sections of living mankind to be brought into direct touch with the assemblies for worship. The fact of later assemblies with the reaching ultimately of all living mankind with the Divine message has connection with the course of the "other virgins" outlined in the illustrative matter of Matt. 25:10: "And while they went to buy the Bridegroom came." Throughout the course of these meetings these "virgins" manifest deep interest and seek to make possible their later acceptance by Christ as partakers of redemption from the earth.

The comprehensive message to be preached at the assemblies for worship does not include the feature of "Whosoever believeth shall be saved." Not any listeners are invited to believe and enter the door to exceptional redemption. This marks another remarkable association of the coming "worship" differing with the order of the age preceding, and making manifest that all invitations to "whosoever" were for the era to Christ's shout. "Foolish virgins" are the first of two large sections of mankind, to regard the assemblies as providing the materials of new wonderful truth, which if accepted will prepare for the redemption previously missed by them: "While they went to buy the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut." This associating of the shutting of the door with the personal coming of Christ, and the later appeal of the "other vir-

gins" for its opening to them, have connections to be considered in succeeding sections.

Section Four.

The various matters traced in the regard of Christ's Shout being heard by "foolish virgins," and of these being the compulsory means of the universal assemblies for worship, have connection with others coming into the associations of this "worship." The matters of Matt. 7:21-23 have their terminus in the coming "interval" and its assemblies for worship. In verse 21 there is a preface to the forecast in the two succeeding verses, as well as a summary of preceding verses. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven." In many other Scriptures there are the expressions of "the will of the Father" for the guidance of all Christ's people, with particular ones for the era from Christ's sign to His shout. "Keeping the Word of My patience" is one of these in Rev. 3:10; learning and confessing the "new song" is another in Rev. 14:3-5; overcoming the beast and his image and the number of his name; singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, are the ones in Rev. 15:2-4.

After stating that those saying "Lord, Lord" must also do the will of His Father to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Christ presents the forecast of Matt. 7:22, 23 concerning some who have said "Lord, Lord" and have not done the will of His Father. Of necessity the ones referred to in this forecast are living on the earth at the time referred to. Not any of the same class during the generations of the age, to the living one of the era ending at Christ's shout, will either be present or say the things recorded in this forecast. And the "many" saying the things are a totally different community to that of the "foolish virgins." These "many" do not hear Christ's shout and are not included among those referred to in Rev. 3:9: "I will make them to come and worship before Thy feet." There is not any "making" with these. And their speaking to Christ is the first matter recorded and not His speaking to them as obtains with "foolish virgins." Christ's speaking in reply to these "many" is the matter of Matt. 7:23.

This is the matter of verse 22: "Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out demons? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works?" These are readily identified by their professions and claims, as the preachers and leaders of "the Synagogue of Satan" referred to in Rev. 3:9, and truly "many" in numbers all over the earth. This forecast is thus the completion of that in Rev. 3:9, in recording the voluntary approach to Christ in speaking of the many constituents of this "Synagogue." The one section is to be "made to come and worship"; the other sections, when realising their exclusion from the "Kingdom of Heaven" through the "worship" then obtaining, are to address Christ in the words recorded in Matt. 7:22.

In the preface in verse 21 Christ refers to "entering the Kingdom," and which has the significance of sharing His nature and glory. In verse 22 there is the use of "in that day" apart from the mention again of "entering the Kingdom," or the reference to any thus "entering." In this verse also there is the presenting out of the mouths of the "many" rather than by Christ's declaration, that they have not "entered" but are excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ will tell all "foolish virgins" in His "shout" from Heaven that they have not "entered the Kingdom." But the "many" of the forecast in Matt. 7:22 tell Him of their known rejection in terms of protest and reproach.

But this verse comprises both features mentioned by Christ in verse 21 in its recording the protest from the "many" rejected ones. It is only by recognition of others who are marked for certain entry into the Kingdom, and not by anything told them, that they know for certain that they are rejected. Only the particular "day" referred to in verse 22 permits of this order of events. If there was not to be any "interval" succeeding Christ's shout and to His personal coming; if the living "last" of Christ's people were not to be "manifested" before the more numerous "first" to the world, not any of these "many" would know of their rejection from the Kingdom. Not any others of the same class in all previous generations of the age knew while alive on the earth that they were not to enter the

Kingdom, but only learn of this on their rising again in a different nature to that provided in the Kingdom.

All these "many" have regarded themselves down to "that day" as Christ's spokesmen on earth; as the only authorised expositors of His Word, and fully ordained by Him as ministers of the Gospel. It is by being supplanted by others as preachers of the Word of Christ in the "assemblies for worship" all over the earth, that these "many" know that Christ has rejected them. The display of the two matters with a living generation of entering the Kingdom by some, and not entering it by others, is only possible by the Divine arrangements of the "interval" between the speaking and personal comings of Christ.

As previously considered the matters revealed concerning the Divine methods with the universal community of "foolish virgins" discloses the instituting all over the earth of assemblies for worship conducted by His manifested living people. This second evidence and testimony to these "assemblies" in the speaking of the community of "many," as in Matt. 7:22, comprises features of the worship indicated in the threefold protests presented. Each of these is in the form of a question and expresses a grievance. "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name?" is the first of these, and having connection with others then preaching "in His Name," and not only reference to the past course of the speakers. Resentment at being supplanted by others and not only on account of being rejected is expressed in the query. The recorded speaking of the "foolish virgins" to the wise after their hearing the verdict of Christ's shout, differs fundamentally with that of the "many" spoken to Christ when they see and hear the same "wise." There is not any resentment nor grievance against Christ's people nor reflection on Christ, but the seeking from the "wise" that which the "foolish" recognise as lacking in themselves.

"Have we not prophesied in Thy Name" bears testimony to the outstanding mark of the "preaching" then obtaining all over the earth, and from which all these "many" are excluded save as listeners. Christ's Name is the one authority presented by every preacher in these coming assemblies. This was the outstanding mark of Apostolic preaching as marking the commencement of the true Chris-

tion Church. Christ's Name was the one in which all His true followers assembled, and not any names of men nor of countries such as obtains with the many sections of the "Synagogue of Satan." At the setting of the "open door," and as recorded in Rev. 3:8, one matter of commendation is that of, "And hast not denied My Name," as additional to "And hast kept My Word." Philadelphians have been the only "Name bearers" of Christ for the era to His shout, as they will be for the interval to His coming.

But during present times assembling and preaching in His Name by a few true worshippers all over the earth does not make any appeal to others assembling in the many Names of the different "denominations" and their respective systems of belief and doctrine. The suspending of all "eating and drinking" in these Names and systems for the "interval" to Christ's coming, parallel with the "days of Noah," will the more display what is meant by "in Thy Name" in the one worship then obtaining all over the earth. Only in the "days of Noah," succeeding the entry into the Ark, and not at any other period of human history, was there the likeness with the universal state of undivided attention to the worship and preaching in His Name by the "last" of Christ's people. The words of Christ in Matt. 24:37, 38 leave no cause for uncertainty in the regard of universal suspension of all opposing and conflicting practices, even though they leave for other Scriptures the revealing of the universal assemblies for worship in Christ's Name. "But as the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. . . . They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark."

The second query and protest of the "many" recorded in Matt. 7:22 bears testimony to another feature of the coming universal assemblies for worship, and is only intelligible as seen in this connection. "Have we not prophesied in Thy Name? And in Thy Name have cast out demons?" It is because some form of this "casting out in Christ's Name" is obtaining at the era marked, that there is this query presented. "Casting out demons," as distinct from, but associated with, "healing all manner of diseases," was a prominent work and sign of the ministry of Jesus and of the Apostles designed to realise the matter referred to

in Hebrews 2:4, "God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His Own will." The beneficent means of healing mental and bodily sickness of vast numbers of sufferers were some of those employed as witnessing to the truth of Christ's atoning death and Resurrection by the power of the Father. In Acts 4:33 there is this further reference: "And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all."

It appears very manifest that the ideas of what is meant by "casting out demons in the name of Jesus," held and expressed by the "many," as in Matt. 7:22, are formed from what they then see taking place. Not anything comparable with the order of Apostolic days in the regard of "casting out demons" is even attempted in modern times. This has bearing both on the coming order and on the claims of the "many" concerning their previous services in this regard. There is not the like need as in Apostolic times for healing mental and bodily diseases as signs to faith in the resurrected Lord during the coming "interval." The "assemblies" for worship are solely for the purpose of "manifesting" Christ's living people, and the preaching of that which has made them ready for the nature and the glory of Christ. The form of "casting out demons" manifest in the service then rendered will be of the kind that further contributes to the appointed revealing of approved Philadelphians, and not for the purpose of making converts of others.

All the "many" referred to in Matt. 7:22, like all "foolish virgins" made to come and worship before the feet of Christ's people, are fully convinced as to the facts of the "manifestation" both of the truth preached and the people made ready by it. But this does not profit either community to the extent of making them to share the standing of the approved people of Christ. The bigger world outside of these two large and universal communities needs also to be fully convinced as to the authority and standing of the manifested ones. Preaching and casting out demons in Christ's Name has this bigger section in view, and not only the constituents of the "Synagogue of Satan."

The third query recorded in Matt. 7:22, and from the "many" rejected ones, distinguishes again from the two previous ones, as it discloses another class of evidences then being presented, "**and in Thy name done many wonderful works.**" It only needs full conviction of the coming events during the "interval" to recognise the necessity for "wonderful works" in their accomplishment. The comparatively small numbers to be manifested to all living mankind in every part of the earth as approved by Christ involves an immensity of "wonderful works." The sullen reminder of the "many wonderful works" that they had previously done in Christ's Name, by the speakers forecasted in Matt. 7:22, is manifestly called forth by the still more wonderful ones then taking place. In this third query, as in the two previous ones, there is not any reflection on the things then being done in their sight and knowledge, nor on those doing them, but only on their own exclusion from any part in the work of the Lord then in progress. These "many" regard themselves as having been supplanted by others, and as entitled to better treatment than that received by them from Christ.

Self-justification is the mark of this threefold speaking with a sense of grievance, which the speakers think merits some explanation from the Lord that they address, and a rectifying at His hands. It is in a crisis that the true state of the human heart is revealed. Not even Christ's forecast of what these "many" will say unto Him at the era marked in it makes any present appeal to the same ones because these do not recognise themselves as the ones referred to. Actually the giving of this forecast ought to have been one means of making its materials non-existent, of assisting the ones referred to into a present state of approval, and thus of dispensing with the future speaking in attempted self-justification. But only to Christ's true people does the forecast make intelligent appeal, as with all matters of revealed truth.

The same "many" referred to in Matt. 7:22, and their matters of protest and attempted self-justification, are the ones of another forecast and warning by Christ addressed to His true people of the present era. The like opportunity of understanding this forecast and warning is available to

the ones referred to in it if there is the desire to understand. In Matt. 24:24, 25 there is the preliminary forecast to that of Matt. 7:22 addressed to the living people of Christ: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before." The "false Christs and Prophets" warned against in these verses include the "many" of the forecasts in Matt. 7:22. And the same three things that the "many" later speak to Christ are the "great signs and wonders" warned against in Matt. 24:24. There is a great difference between the "false Christs and Prophets" in this verse and the ones referred to in verse 5 in the same chapter, and also of Christ's warning as in verse 4.

"For many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." Not any of these ever made profession to be followers of Christ, but, on the contrary, sought to supplant Him and to make Him to appear as an impostor and themselves as the true Christ. But the "false Christs and Prophets" warned against in verse 24 and at the era to His return are all professed followers of Christ and expositors of His Word. By daring to set aside His word in theories and speculations of their own, and still professing His service, they are both "false Christs and false Prophets."

The "great signs and wonders" done by these, and as proving in the estimate of the ones doing them that they are the true people of Christ, are readily manifest, as also that not any of these could prove anything where the beliefs and teachings are contrary to Christ's "due truth." Both before and during the era from the appearing of Christ's sign, many philanthropic services have originated in religious associations, together with great zeal in missionary enterprise in foreign lands, and calculated to impress with the thought of these being marks of Christ's service. The fact of Christ's mention of these matters and warning against being "deceived" by them, anticipated the very appeals made concerning them. The time for "wonderful works" with the true people of Christ is after, and not before, His shout. The "works of faith" resulting from an enlightened state of mind on the Divine purpose are the

ones that mark the "very elect" referred to by Christ in Matt. 24: 24, 25.

The spoken reply by Christ to the spoken appeal and protest of the "many" in Matt. 7:22 is forecasted in verse 23. This latter is also remarkable in recording the exact words which Christ will speak, and as marking His second speaking from Heaven to the first of His "shout," and to a large community all over the earth not addressed in His first speaking: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." This "then" is after the appeal and protest; apart from this, Christ would not speak to these "many." His speaking in reply to their appeal confirms that which these applicants already know concerning their rejection, but adds that which they learn for the first time from His speaking. "I never knew you" is the first matter, and connected with the address to Him as "Lord," and which comprehends their previous course in His professed service and addresses to Him as Lord.

Christ does not address these "many" in the same words as those spoken in His "shout" to the community of the "unprofitable servant." Although these share the name of the world, He does not address them as "wicked and slothful servant," but tells them that they have never been in His service and fellowship, and not that they have failed to make progress in it—"I never knew you." In this, as in the protests of these "many" there is involved connection with the others then standing forth before the world as His known and approved people, and supplanting these rejected preachers and leaders. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" is the testimony of 2nd Timothy 2:19. And it is because of this "knowing" that the other preachers and those standing with them causing the appeal and protest of the "many" are in the approved standing before the world as representing Christ. All these have been justified by Him on account of their belief in and obedience to the "Word of His patience," rejected and opposed by the ones addressing Him as Lord, but not doing the will of His Father.

"Depart from Me ye that work iniquity" is the second feature of the recorded reply in Matt. 7:23, and to the three

matters presented by the "many." Preaching in His Name; casting out demons and doing many wonderful works in His Name, are all declared as "works of iniquity." As defined in other Scriptures, "iniquity" is sin of the heart, and by continuance hinders any part in the nature of Christ. "Departing from iniquity" and becoming pure in heart are essentials to acceptance with Christ. The fact of presenting these three matters as meriting entrance into the Kingdom, by those who have refused and opposed the due truth sent to provide the right to exceptional redemption, is proof of the presence of "iniquity" of the heart.

The command to "depart from Me" has first significance to the rejection of the appeals made and the confirming of exclusion from the Kingdom. This speaking by Christ to all the living teachers of mankind, outside of the community of "foolish virgins," previously addressed in His "shout," completes the enlightenment of the religious section of living mankind on the Divine estimate of their standing. This leaves the remaining third of the world outside of these two communities, and affected by the offer of exceptional redemption, to be spoken to in another and recorded connection. Christ does not delegate to His manifested people the duty of speaking to all sections of mankind, as to their final standing in His sight, and in regard to the Kingdom of Heaven. All inquirers in this regard during the assemblies for worship are referred to Christ, as powerfully marked in the answer of the "wise" to the request of the "foolish virgins" recorded in Matt. 25:8, 9.

Other parallel Scriptures with Matt. 7:23 reveal that Christ's command to the "many" in the regard of "depart from Me" has also application to their speedy destruction. These prominent leaders and teachers in the "Synagogue of Satan" have misled their peoples during the era to Christ's shout. With the secular leaders these religious ones have been opposed to the doctrine of Christ's personal coming and Kingdom on earth, and are included in the forecast in 1st Thess, 5:3, previously considered: "For when they shall say peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." The coming of the day of the Lord into the night of the earth marks the destruction of all these misleading teachers. So serious is their offence in the Divine estimate.

The concluding matter in the "Parable of the Pounds" in Luke 19:27 has the like significance as the forecast of 1st Thess. 5:3: But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay before Me." This speaking is additional to that of Matt. 7:23, and concerning the same ones, but also including another "many" comprehended in the "them" of 1st Thess. 5:3. The "unprofitable servant" community from whom the one talent and pound are taken, and referred to in Luke 19:24-26, are not included amongst the "enemies" mentioned in verse 27. The difference between adversaries to the "due truth" of Christ's Word, and enemies to Christ's personal coming and reign on earth, is marked in these revelations of coming things.

All sections of the "Synagogue of Satan" are adversaries to the "Word of Christ's patience." And all sections save the one of "foolish virgins" are enemies to the personal reign of Christ on earth. As previously considered in our studies in Rev. 3:9, the "Synagogue of Satan" there referred to is wholly comprised of Gentiles by birth and religious beliefs, and succeeding the people of Israel as the adversaries of Christ's truth. Living Israel is to pass out of age-lasting blindness and rejection by God, at the era that living Gentiles pass into the state vacated by Israel. But the use of "enemies" in Luke 19:27 is limited to the secular and religious leaders of mankind.

For the Gospel Age and to the appearing of Christ's sign the only enemies of Christ were the people of Israel. The difference between God's enemies and Christ's enemies is marked in the Scriptures. The natural state of the human race, of being constituents of the sinful world named "wicked," is the one of enmity to God. It is concerning all the human race that there is the use of "enemies" in Romans 5:10: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." In verse 1, and the regard of those who have ceased to be God's enemies, there are the words, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The exclusive use of "God," apart from any association of the Name and Person of Christ, obtains in all such references as that of James 4:4: "The friendship

of the world is **enmity** with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the **enemy of God**." The reference to "Christ's enemies" marks a different domain.

Of necessity any "enmity" to Christ could only result from His earthly life and mission; it could not and did not obtain previous to His appearing in flesh. And such "enmity" was additional to that of the natural "enmity" to God in all mankind, expressing hostility to and rejection of Christ as the promised Messiah by the one people to whom this promise was given. It is to Israel and not to any Gentiles that the prophecy of Psalm 110:1 refers, and which "prophecy" is quoted several times in the New Testament: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This "making" by the Father has been in process for the Gospel Age, and in the severe visitations upon Israel, distinct from and beyond those of Gentile experience. For the same age believing Gentiles have been prepared for sharing the Throne of Christ, the "footstool" of which is to include all generations of disciplined Israel—Christ's "enemies."

It is of Israel, and addressed to believing Gentiles, that Romans 11:28 has reference and not to any others of mankind: "As concerning the Gospel they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election they are beloved for the Fathers' sakes." And this, in turn with many other references in the Epistle to the Romans to the "enmity" of Israel to Christ, has connection with another feature of the "Parable of the Pounds" not considered previously.

The "enemies" referred to in Luke 19:27 are not the same ones as the subjects in verse 14, even though both verses refer to the like matter of hostility to Christ's reign on earth. The era of Christ's departure from the earth is the one of the mention of the "enemies" in verse 14, and of these as "His citizens." The era of His return is the one of verse 27, and its mention of "enemies" and their destruction. The Gospel Age elapses between the two different matters and verses. There is the distinguishing between "His servants" called to receive the "pounds" at His departure—as in verse 13—and the ones designated "His citizens" in verse 14: "And He called His ten servants, and delivered unto them ten pounds, and said unto them,

Occupy till I come. But His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." These "citizens" were the people of Israel ministered to by the Lord, and the only ones to whom He came at His first appearing.

These, as declared in several parables and associated expositions, were the first invited into His Kingdom, as they were "His own" by the close connections of descent from the Fathers, or "according to the flesh." Although these "citizens" had shown their hatred of Him before His departure to the far country, by refusing, betraying and murdering Him, there is not any mention of this in Luke 19:14, but only of the message that they sent after His departure: "And sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." This "after message" indicated the continuance of "hating Him" for the time of His absence, and as the response of "His citizens" to the time of His return. The one connection of this in the parable is that of forecasting that "His citizens" would not become "His servants," and not of their experiences during His absence nor that brought to them at His return. Other Scriptures fully expound the removal of Israel's blindness and the ceasing of "hatred and enmity" against Christ, as the result of His appearing again to them.

There is a fundamental difference between the "citizens" of Luke 19:14 and their "hatred" of Christ as King, and the "enemies" referred to in verse 27, and their opposition to Christ's reign over them. Israel hated and hates Christ because He is regarded as an impostor—a mere pretender—by them. They are enemies to Christ, and not to the Divine Kingdom on earth under the glorious "Messiah." A "personal reign on earth" is the longing and aspiration of everyone in Israel. A Divine Kingdom set up on earth under the authority of the Lord Messiah is the national hope of Israel, but not of the "enemies" referred to in Luke 19:27, and comprising the leaders and teachers of the Gentiles alive on the earth at Christ's return. Gentile Christendom and not Judaism is responsible for formulating a system of religious belief, which dispenses with the need for the personal coming and reign on earth of the Lord's Messiah.

These are the ones referred to as "many" in Matt. 7:22, 23; as "them" in 1st Thess. 5:3, and as "mine enemies" in Luke 19:27: "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me." A striking feature of this speaking by Christ is that of its association with His "shout," and in the hearing of His "faithful servants," and not in the hearing of the "enemies" referred to in it. In this regard it is parallel with the speaking concerning the "unprofitable servant" recorded in Matt. 25:28-30, Luke 19:24-26, but with a material difference. With the "unprofitable servant" there is the injunction for His people to perform the service of "casting into outer darkness," and which is accomplished during the succeeding interval. But the bringing and destroying of His enemies is not any commission given to His people. The announcement of this is spoken in their hearing.

It is after this speaking by Christ concerning His "enemies" and their purposed destruction that the "many" recorded in Matt. 7:22, 23 make their appeal and protest to Him and receive His spoken verdict. But this does not include the feature previously spoken in the hearing of His people, and recorded in Luke 19:27. The omission of this feature in Christ's speaking to the "many," as in Matt. 7:23, the more emphasises the use of "sudden" employed in 1st Thess. 5:3: "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." With these "many," as with all others to later experience the severe visitation commencing on the day of Christ's personal coming, there is likeness with "the days of Noah," as forecasted in Matt. 24:39: "And knew not until the Flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

Section Five.

In addition to the two large communities of "foolish virgins" and the "many" of Matt. 7:22, 23, a third community all over the earth finds mention in the forecast in Luke 13:23-27. There is the use of "many" in this as in the forecast of Matt. 7:22, 23, but to a manifestly larger community than either of the two considered. Indeed, there

is need only to enter into this forecast with enlightened understanding of the facts of the era then present to have brought to the mind such immensity of numbers comprised in the "many" referred to, as to further make small by comparison all assemblies of past and present times. And the attitude of these "many" provides a deeper insight into that of the world in Noah's days, expressed in their suspending for the seven days' interval all "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." These "many" of Luke 13:24-27 provide a parallel with the world of those "seven days" more than the two communities of the religious world considered previously.

It is from the sayings of these "many," as with the sayings of the "many" referred to in Matt. 7:22, 23, that the "universal meetings" responsible for their utterances are made manifest. This method in Christ's forecasts conceals from the idly curious the primary matter of revelation in them, but discloses it to those seeking to understand the first "manifestation of the Sons of God." The forecast in Luke 13:23-27 presents the third evidence of the full "manifestation," and this out of the mouths of the "many witnesses." In verses 28, 29 of the same chapter there is further confirmation of the "manifestation" intended in verses 23-27, in the mention of the different "manifestation" of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets to the different "many" of Israel in the Kingdom Age.

A question put to Christ as to the numbers to be saved marks the preface to this forecast recorded in Luke 13:23: "Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved?" Christ did not make any answer to this question, but proceeded to emphasise the supreme importance of the "great salvation" in the words of verse 24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." This same "gate" had been referred to in a previous address by Christ, as in Matt. 7:13, 14, and as admitting into a "narrow way leading unto life which few find." This previous exposition was evidently responsible for the question, "Are there few that be saved?" calling forth the exposition and forecast in Luke 13:23-27. In this the urging of all to "strive to enter the strait gate" has the introductory feature of the forecast as its next matter; "For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

As in a flash there is the passing over all intervening times to the terminus, and when admittance through the "strait gate" is not further possible, even though sought for by the "many" referred to. In this also there is the marking of the difference between "seeking and being able to enter" with the "many" referred to, and which has connection with the use of "strive to enter the strait gate" in Christ's opening words. The difference between "striving and seeking to enter" is marked in His words. "Striving" is agonising or earnestly endeavouring, and ensures certain entrance. Merely "seeking" is not sufficiently intensive or whole-hearted, and manifests the absence of necessary ability to enter. So the terminus forecasted is not only that of closing the "strait gate," but also that of closing it on account of the absence of "ability" to enter with any of then living mankind, and not only by Divine decree.

The forecast indicates that all "able to enter" have done so previous to the terminus marked, and is in agreement with our considerations on Rev. 14:3 and the learning of the "new song," also the parallel matter of Rev. 15:2 on the standing on the glassy sea. How powerful are the words that "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" after this terminus is reached!

From this first feature of the forecast in Luke 13:24 Christ passes on in verse 25 to definitely locate the time when the "many" vainly seek to enter the then closed "strait gate." In this 25th verse Christ refers to these as "ye," and tells what these will say to Him at the time marked and what He will say in reply: "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are." Until this clearly-marked time arrives Christ's earnest appeal to all mankind in every generation of the age is the one of verse 24, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." And this "appeal" during the years since Christ's sign appeared has had the association of "exceptional redemption" as the portion of all thus "striving." But not any of the "many" referred to in the forecast and living on the earth during

this era have "striven to enter in," but are all included in the summary of Rev. 14:3—"No man could learn that song."

As forecasted by Christ, it is "when the door is shut to" that further entrance through the "strait gate" is not possible nor allowed. And it is after this "shutting to the door" that the "many" seek admittance through the known closed door, asking for it to be opened to them. But this seeking for the opening of the closed "door" by the "many" is when these believe that they have already entered the "strait gate." In this, as in other references to "door," there is indicated the entrance to eternal life and glory with Christ. And the distinct matter of "strait gate" refers to the entrance into the justified standing of faith, marking the beginning of the "narrow way leading unto life." These "many" become converts, professing faith in Christ after the "shutting to of the door," and regard this "conversion" as passing through the "strait gate," and as authorising their asking for the opening to them of the known closed door.

These remarkable matters would be impossible apart from the universal meetings then taking place. Not any of these "many" hear Christ's shout or know anything of the ending of the offer of "exceptional redemption," or, indeed, that such an offer had been before the world for the era then ended. Their knowledge of the "strait gate and the door" is a result of preaching then in progress throughout the earth, and not of any previous understanding or interest. Unlike "foolish virgins," these "many" have not even professed any faith in the coming and Kingdom of Christ previous to the "shutting to of the door." And if there had not been necessity for the "manifestation of the Sons of God" to all living mankind, not any of these "many" would have made profession of faith and sought to have part in redemption from the earth. Their attitude before the closing of the "door" at Christ's shout would be unchanged apart from the remarkable preaching services then taking place.

Although all the "many" referred to by Christ in His forecast in Luke 13:24-27 are now living on the earth, they are not now doing that which the forecast describes. And

not any of these "many" know that they are referred to in the forecast, and that they will speak the matters and to the things that Christ defined. And not any present preaching of the truth can convince these "many" either of the application of Christ's forecast or the wisdom of present "striving to enter the strait gate," and of thus obtaining the right to enter the "open door" to glorious redemption from the earth.

The result of the "preaching services" conducted by Philadelphians on the "many" of this forecast in Luke 3:24-27 is a very different one to that recorded of the other "many" in Matt. 7:22, 23. There is not any resentment nor sense of grievance nor mention of a previous state with the petitioners in the one forecast like there is with the ones of the other. A new, sudden change of mind is the basis of appeal for the opening of the known closed door, with the "many" of Luke 13:24, 25. All these are sudden converts to the preached message, and believe and hope that they can share redemption from the earth by asking the Lord for a part in this, "Lord, Lord, open to us." Not any such appeal is made by the "many" referred to in Matt. 7:22, even though the one that is recorded of them embodies the feature of the known closed door, but that it ought not to be closed against them.

Before considering Christ's reply to the appeal of the "many" for the opening of the door to them, it is necessary to understand His definition of the closing of the same door, as in Luke 13:25: "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door." This passes over without mention of the previous opening of the door at the appearing of His sign, referred to in the "message to Philadelphia" in Rev. 3:8: "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." The becoming designation of "Master of the House" is employed of Himself in Christ's forecast. The "rising up" at the time marked is in agreement with many other Scriptures which refer to His being "seated at the Father's right hand" since His ascension.

The "rising up of the Master of the house" is identical with the first stage of His coming—that of His shout from Heaven. At this "rising up" there is the "shutting to the

door." This is a first to a later last at His personal coming. The door is put to at Christ's shout as not to be entered by any others save those then within its house. The later stage of "shutting the door" is the one of Matt. 25:10: "The Bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage; and the door was shut." It is on account of the manifested people of Christ being in the flesh during the interval between His shout and His personal coming that there are the two stages of "shut to" and "shut" with the door.

It is after the door is "shut to" that the "many" of Matt. 7:22, 23 and more numerous "many" of Luke 13:24-27 make their respective appeals to Christ in prayer, and receive His spoken answer. But it is after the door is shut that the "other virgins" make their appeal for its opening to them, as in Matt. 25:10-12: "And the door was shut; afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." This is a second speaking to these by Christ to the first of His "shout." For the course of the interval and of the "preaching services" these other virgins are seeking to apprehend and make their own the wonderful truths expounded by the authorised preachers. "While they went to buy" is the illustrative matter in this regard in Matt. 25:10, and only of these "other virgins," and not of the different communities of "many," is there this mention of continued seeking.

This course with the "other virgins" the more discloses the quick decision the "sudden conversions" of the "many" referred to in Luke 13:24, 25 as the result of hearing the beautiful truth expounded with authority. All these really believe that they are fully prepared for Christ's nature and glory, as the result of accepting at once the truth proclaimed by His preachers. Christ's answer to this sudden appeal has been written in His Word for nearly 19 centuries, but only becomes "due truth" at the time marked as with other forecasts: "And He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are." Only by understanding that the preaching responsible for the professed faith of these "many" is not designed for making converts of those previously neglectful of the "great salva-

tion" does this reply to their appeal become intelligible. It is really astonishing that Christ could give this forecast apart from its recognition by the ones referred to in it, both of what they will say and what He will say in reply. Such is the darkness of mind where enlightened faith is absent.

"For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." These would have entered in before if they had been "able." Lack of ability marked the state of heart which is unchanged by circumstances. For the era during which the "door" was open not any of these "many" even sought to enter, much less manifested the required "striving." Christ's reply comprehends this previous era, "I know you not whence ye are." In addressing Him twice as "Lord" there is the reminder that they are "strangers" to Him; that they had never previously confessed His Lordship. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" is the matter which explains this ignorance of the Lord concerning these "many."

The reply to the "many" in Matt. 7:22, 23, although bearing some likeness with the one in Luke 13:25 and to the other "many," differs also in others. "I never knew you" has a significance absent in the other reply, "I know you not whence ye are." The "many" receiving the severe reply of "I never knew you" base their appeal to Him as their Lord, on their previous preaching and works in His service. The "many" addressed in the reply in Luke 13:25 do not make any mention of their previous course, but only of their presumed approved standing at the time of their appeal. If any of these had previously professed faith in Him, they have learned from the fact of their rejection not to include it in their appeal for the opening of the closed door to them. But of necessity Christ's reply comprehends their course during the vitally important era then ended; exactly the same as His verdict in His previous "shout" upon the "faithful and unprofitable servants." The previous course of these "many" was responsible for their spoken rejection after their profession of faith in Him as their Lord.

The later reply by Christ to the appeal of the "other virgins" after His personal coming and the translation of

His people, differs again with both replies to the two communities of "many" just considered, as in Matt. 25:11, 12. It is after the door is shut that these make the appeal for its opening to them, in firm conviction that they have obtained the right to enter by their continued "seeking" during the course of the interval: "But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." This is a second and final reply to the ones addressed; a second and final rejection of "the unprofitable servant" to the first of His shout. In this "second" there is a connection with the previous first of His shout, although there is not the use again of the designation of "wicked and slothful" to them. All their efforts to alter His previous verdict by seeking to understand the truths preached by the "wise" do not impress Christ to cause Him to reverse His verdict. He has not any confidence in them; He does not trust them; their professions do not convince Him of sincerity of heart.

In this there is another display of the matter of John 2:23-25: "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all. And needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man." Christ must and will be certain of everyone that He takes into His nature and glory. "Verily I say unto you, I know you not," has a marked note of regret not present in the recorded replies to the two other communities, and which has connection with the recognised continuous "seeking" to understand during the interval then ended. He had previously "known" these to the extent of appreciation of their declared belief in His coming and Kingdom, hence does not employ the like terms with them as with the other communities—"I never knew you, I know you not whence ye are." There is both solemnity and a note of regret in the final rejection of the "other virgins" from His nature and glory, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." This final does not permit nor receive any further appeal.

But the speaking by Christ to the "many," as in Luke 13:25, and just previously considered, at an early stage of the "interval," is not regarded as final. His declaration that "I know you not whence ye are" has the result recorded in verse 26: "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our

streets.'" This mention of "eating and drinking in Thy presence," and associated with the time then present, has marked connection with true worship then obtaining all over the earth where these "many" are located, as it has with the previous era and its wrong "eating and drinking." It is certain that the only ones now living on the earth, having any understanding of both kinds of "eating and drinking" referred to in the Scriptures, are comprised in the "angel and Church in Philadelphia." It is from these latter that the "many" learn of "eating and drinking in Christ's presence," and of the universal "eating and drinking" in forbidden associations during the era then ended. The appeal for the door to be opened unto them is based on this matter of their entering into the true worship then obtaining on the earth.

Christ's "presence" is the outstanding matter of the universal meetings then being conducted on earth, as compulsorily acknowledged by all the other "many" referred to in Matt. 7:22, 23. "In Thy Name" are the descriptive words of the one community of "many"; and "in Thy presence" those of the other, both referring to the one matter clearly defined in Rev. 3:9, "to come and worship before Thy feet." For the whole Gospel Age, and not only during the short era of the "interval" to Christ's personal coming, there has been realised the promised "presence" of Christ, as in Matt. 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Apostolic days marked this "presence" in the midst of those gathered "in His Name," more wonderfully than in all later times save the era of the interval after Christ's shout.

When Christ dismisses the appeal of these "many" for the opening of the closed door to them, there is the realisation of His own words in Luke 13:24: "For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." This "seeking" by the "many" is by their joining in the worship conducted by the manifested people of Christ. The fact of having done this is presented by them to Christ as fully justifying the opening of the closed door to them, and in answer to His words, "I know you not whence ye are." These "many" regard their "seeking" as abun-

dantly sufficient and as manifesting "able to enter." They believe themselves to be included in the manifested Divine cause all over the earth, and are amazed when their request for Christ's approval is not granted.

"We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence" expresses their complying with the requirements for eternal life and glory which have been apparently overlooked by Christ, as also that they could not do more than this. "**And Thou hast taught in our streets**" is further expression of their presumed right to be regarded as Christ's true people, as it is to the localities of the "assemblies for worship." If these meetings were only of a private character with invitations to particular ones, there might be cause for all others regarding themselves as not included—but "Thou hast taught in our streets." The fact of public assemblies in the open air for "whosoever" to attend; of these marking most powerfully the "**presence**" of Christ and the power of His Gospel; of "His Name" being the one authority presented for their being held—are all involved in the words "and Thou hast taught in our streets." They contain the underlying query: "If these public assemblies for worship and exposition of Divine truth are not for convincing 'whosoever will,' why are they held?"

It is out of the mouths of these "many" witnesses that the localities of the "worship before Thy feet," as in Rev. 3:9, are made manifest, and which are absent in the many other presentations of the same worship. There is need only to recognise the immensity of these coming "assemblies" to appreciate that they must be held in the open air, and in such places as Christ selects and appoints. Those who are to conduct and take part in them do not even know their fellow-believers and servants in other parts of the earth. Only those in fellowship with the little company of which they are constituents know each other. The coming "manifestation of the Sons of God" is to each other, and not only to the world. Never was there such complete absence of organisation as in those to be "**manifested**" in the world-wide assemblies for worship. Until Christ's shout all these are truly a "**hidden people**," without any plans of their own even for the universal service which they know is appointed for them.

In agreement with the two terms in the original Greek (both rendered "streets" in the Authorised Version), referring to narrow and wide spaces, modern versions translate Luke 13:26 "open squares" instead of streets. And this is in accord with the manifest facts of the coming worship. The "manifestation" is to be made in such associations as will ensure its recognition by all the world. Not any of living mankind affected by the universal opportunity of obtaining "exceptional redemption" during the era then ended but is to be enlightened concerning those who have obtained it. This is parallel with the seeing of Noah and his house within the Ark for the seven days before the coming of the Flood by the whole of that world.

Another manifest reason for presenting the forecast in Luke 13:28, 29 as immediately succeeding the one in verses 23-27 is this: The many listening to Christ's presentation of these matters of the then future have not any inclusion in the "many" referred to in verses 23-27, but they are the ones intended in the forecast in verses 28, 29: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." This explains why Christ employs "many" in verse 24, and not "you," in commencing His forecast and in addressing the listening "you." Those listening to Him were not the "many" of this forecast. "For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Not any of the people of Israel hearing Christ preach in their "open squares," and refusing His message, will seek to enter the strait gate and not be able at the era of Christ's shout. But all these will later and when the Divine Kingdom is set up on earth be the subjects of the exclusion from its glory, as in Luke 13:28. Thus the "many" referred to in verse 24, and addressed as "ye" in verses 25, 27, are living Gentiles who have enjoyed the offer of "exceptional redemption" for the era to Christ's shout. The "ye, you" of verse 28 were the people of Israel to whom Christ ministered.

To unbelieving Israel listening to Him, Christ presented the matter of verses 28, 29 as marking their future position on being restored to life, as exactly parallel with that of

the "many" of His other forecast in verses 23-27. They would seek to enter the Kingdom where their Fathers and the Prophets were seen in glory, and would not be able. Like the other "many," they would be "thrust out" from the glory shared by their Fathers. In this also there was a comparison between the years of His ministry and the era ending at His "shout," during which the "many" later seeking to enter had neglected to "strive" to enter. Their own faithful Fathers and Prophets, and not Himself and His people, were the manifested ones in the Kingdom which Christ referred to when speaking to unbelieving Israel, with the desire to influence them to believe His Word.

In His forecast in Luke 13:23-27, Gentiles are the primary ones addressed. And all generations of these are appealed to in the one regard of "striving to enter the strait gate," but only the one living during the era to His coming are the subjects of the warning, concerning inability to enter when the door is shut to. This one generation of Gentiles bears comparison in these forecasts with the one generation of Israel of Christ's times, in the regard of the future seeking with both and inability with each. Not any other generation of unbelieving Gentiles of the whole Gospel Age will have opportunity of "seeking to enter when the door is shut to." The Divine purpose of the manifesting of the living approved people of Christ is the cause of the difference with the one generation of Gentiles.

The one difference between the two forecasts in Luke 13:23-27 and in verses 28, 29 is that of recording the names of the manifested ones in the latter, and not mentioning the manifested ones of the former. When the one purpose of the "interval" to Christ's personal coming is understood, the matters associated with the "many" are seen as a third testimony from another large section of living mankind called forth by the new order then obtaining.

The second speaking by Christ forecasted in Luke 13:27, and in reply to the profession of having "eaten and drunk in Thy presence," only confirms the first, and adds a further matter of reproof: "But He shall say, I tell you I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me all ye workers of iniquity." The addition of the matter of the second clause of this answer to that of His first speaking to

these same applicants, presents His estimate of the efforts to repair previous neglect and refusal by sudden conversion and association with the true worship of His proved people. The works of iniquity intended in the speaking by Christ to the "many," as in Matt. 7:23, were those of their lives previous to His shout, and presented as just claims for entering the Kingdom. The "works of iniquity" condemned with the "many" of Luke 13:27 are those of seeking to be regarded as true worshippers by association with His manifested faithful people, and believers in the truths preached by them.

This twice speaking to these "many" by Christ, together with His speaking to the other "many," as in Matt. 7:23, and the later reply to the appeal of the "other virgins," recorded in Matt. 25:12, all succeed His "shout." The Divine intention of removing all causes for ignorance concerning the times then present and impending with living mankind is revealed in this diverse speaking from Heaven as additional to the testimony of His manifested people. These remarkable means of enlightening the world must be borne in mind when reading the prophetic forecasts of the "war of God Almighty," parallel with the visitation of the Flood. A wondering, astonished world will be the subjects of the altogether isolated "manifestations" during the interval to Christ's personal coming for His people. God's declaration of "war" on the world requires this previous making known universally of things as they appear to Him.

Section Six.

The arrival of the last day of the "interval" parallel with the commencement of the Flood is strongly marked in Christ's forecasts. This is the day of all days to Christ's people, the day of His glorious appearing for them. The manner of the coming on that day is the one of Matt. 24:27: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." This comparison to the appearing for His people at the end of the "interval" succeeding His previous "shout," differs with that of the exact description of His "revelation" some forty years later on the clouds of Heaven to the harvest generation, as in Luke 17:29, 30:

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all. **even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.**" The same "revelation" in the end of the harvest, and in the sight of living mankind, but apart from the fiery associations to the particular subjects referred to in Luke 17:29, 30, is the matter of Matt. 24:30: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven; and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory." There is not any such "coming" nor seeing by living mankind in the appearing of Christ for His people. And the "sign" for this appearing has been on earth and not in Heaven for the era preceding.

It is therefore in agreement with the great "object lesson" in the days of Noah, that Christ's coming for His people and not His "revelation" at the end of the harvest bears comparison with the coming of the Flood. But in his regard there is the careful distinguishing in Christ's forecast in Matt. 24:39-41 between the distinct matters of destruction and deliverance by the same Flood, and the use and application of "so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Only in the matter of "and knew not until the Flood came and took them all away" is there this comparison with His Own coming. The same coming of the Flood resulted in the taking away of Noah and his house, but this is not included in the comparison because it was not any "object lesson" for the taking away of the living people of Christ at His coming. Noah's entry into the Ark and the succeeding interval with the coming of the Flood are all included in the "object lesson" in Matt. 24:37-39, but not the taking away of Noah and his house by the same means which destroyed all others.

Christ carefully avoided presenting the experiences of Noah and his house at the coming of the Flood as any likeness with that to overtake His people on the day of His coming. The day when the Flood commenced only marked the commencement of the means for taking away the disobedient world, and the different taking away of all within the Ark. The parallel day of Christ's coming also marks the commencement of the means for taking away from life and being of the living adult generation. **But that same**

day fully realises the translation from the earth and from among mankind of all the "manifested" people of Christ. It is in this regard that Matt. 24:40, 41 continues the forecast in verse 39, but apart from presenting any comparison in its matter with events at the first coming of the Flood: "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left." There was not any likeness with this "taking and leaving" on the day that the Flood commenced.

The forecast in Matt. 24:40, 41, and of the taking of the ones referred to, is as exact as the forecast and comparison of the different taking of the respective "all" in verse 39. "Until the Flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be," is contrasted with the different order in verses 40, 41 and of the "taking" away of another "all." This first forecast of the translation of Christ's people separates the whole community into individuals, in marked contrast with the community feature of the previous "interval." And each "individual" to be translated that day is presented as being with another to be "left." In the later forecasts of the same translation in 1st Thess. 4:17, Rev. 14:3, the community aspect is the one presented, and apart from any suggestions of individual associations with others to be "left." Apart from Christ's forecast it might easily be concluded that the known day of translation by all those to share it would be spent in united communion within each group of Christ's people in the different parts of the earth.

The revealed order of Translation is that of the individual, and of each being with an individual witness, "One shall be taken and the other left." Although in fact all then living mankind excluded from sharing "exceptional redemption" are actually left when the others appointed for it are taken, Christ's forecast limits the application of "left" to the same numbers as the translated ones. The numbers to be taken, as in Rev. 14:3, thus determine also the numbers of the "left" ones. One hundred and forty-four thousand are to be translated from the same numbers of witnesses, in individual associations all over the earth exactly defined in the forecast. When there is understanding of the previous "manifestation" of those to be trans-

lated that day to all around them, the order outlined in Matt. 24:40, 41 becomes even more arresting.

An inseparable matter of the "manifestation" in the assemblies for worship will be the impending translation of Christ's people. When the fact itself takes place all over the earth at the one moment of time, there will be the further impressing of living mankind of that previously told them, and of the invisible appearing of Christ as its one great cause. The several previous applications of the matter of Luke 21:26 in the regard of the extraordinary events during the "interval" will be surpassed in intensity by the universal knowledge of the accomplished translation of the "manifested" ones: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Such things have never previously taken place.

In Matt. 24:40, 41 there is the mention of respective pairs together in the "field and grinding at the mill," when the one of each is taken and the other left. In a contemporary mention of these same "pairs" in Luke 17:35, 36 there is in verse 34 this added matter of another "pair," and which is made more striking by the opening words of the announcement: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other shall be left." It is clear from this that the day and not night marks the time of the two other matters of the forecast—"two in the field, two grinding at the mill." As revealed in Genesis 7:11, it was day when the Flood commenced in the portion of the earth inhabited by that world of mankind, even though it was night in another part of the earth. The reference to "that night" and the two together in one bed is not presented in Christ's forecast recorded in Matthew. This omission may have been in order to preserve a true connection with the day when the Flood commenced in the matters forecasted.

The prophecy in Luke 17:34-37, which comprises the three "pairs," was spoken by Christ on a previous occasion to that in Matthew, and is kept separate from the one in verses 26-30, treating on the parallel days of Noah and Lot with those of "the Son of Man." Between the two forecasts, and as distinguishing them from each other, there are the earnest appeals recorded in verses 31-33 addressed

to Christ's people during the present era. Only for the times ending at the coming of Christ for His people is there the appeal to "remember Lot's wife" with each delivered one, and not any preceding nor succeeding times. Lot's wife had shared the first portion of "exceptional deliverance" from impending destruction on others, and by "looking back" she lost her part in full deliverance. Only those privileged in obtaining a present portion in the promised "exceptional redemption" from the earth can be in a parallel position where the experience of Lot's wife appeals as warning. In Luke 9:62, and addressed to all other portions of the age, there is not any such comparison as that of "Lot's wife" in the exhortation given: "And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."

After thus carefully distinguishing the times of His revelation, as in Luke 17:30, from the times ending at His coming for His people marked in the appeals in verses 31-33, there is the forecast of the three "pairs" in verses 34-36, commencing with the one omitted in the later forecast in Matthew: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." This and the succeeding mention of the two other "pairs" in verses 35, 36 was presented by Christ apart from any further explanation, and which was responsible for the further matter recorded in verse 37 from the listening disciples: "And they answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." This "enigma" indicated that the matter spoken concerning the three "pairs" and the taking of one of each was not for their then present understanding. Although spoken in their hearing, its meaning was hidden.

The same "enigma" is part of the forecast of the manner of the Lord's coming in Matt. 24:27, 28, addressed to the present era, and as a reply to the false theories of the ones referred to in verse 26: "For as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." The full explanation of this "enigma" is presented in the fore-

cast in Matt. 24:40, 41, as connected with the coming of the Lord compared with that of the Flood in verse 39. Seven days' interval preceded the coming of the Flood, and succeeded the coming into the Ark by Divine invitation, as the likeness with the "coming of the Son of Man." The one in the field, the one at the mill, and the one in bed, comprehend the fully enlightened ones to be translated that day, and comprise the "eagles to be gathered together." The eternal provision brought by Christ for these far-seeing ones is the "body" referred to in the enigma.

Understanding of the whole subject of the "last being first" was only possible after the setting of the "open door" and the giving of the Word of Christ's patience, as clearly indicated in Luke 21:28-31, Rev. 3:7-10. Not until "exceptional redemption" was promised by Christ to the "last labourers," not until the unsealing of the truths hidden from all previous generations during the present era, was it possible to obtain the far-seeing sight of faith which clearly discerns the whole course appointed, through the present era and the coming "interval" to the day of His personal coming and "taking" the ready ones.

Apart from understanding the revealed course of events, the forecasted three "pairs" on the day of His coming and the one of each being "taken" and the other left does not make any intelligent appeal to the mind. The fact of revealing—in Rev. 14:3—the exact numbers of the ones to be translated has further bearing on the matter of these "pairs" in presenting the forecast in its designed magnitude and universal area. The three domains of "in the field," "at the mill" and "in bed" are not exceptional to the particular "pairs" of the forecast, but are the only ones possible with living mankind on that and all other days. On that "day and that night" all over the earth there will be vast numbers of other "pairs" together in the three domains of Christ's forecast, as well as the hundred forty and four thousands of the prophecy. But only the ones of the forecast are of Divine arrangement and to serve the Divine purpose.

"Then shall two be in the field" has the clear significance of outside, in the open and not indoors. The fact of the forecast being exact in its intimations, of that which is

comprised in it being limited to the two matters stated—two together, one taken and the other left—forbids any associations of the mystical with its simple declarations. There is not even the recording of anything done or said by these “two in the field.” There is not any need for more information than that these two are together in the open on the day of the translation of the one. All previous times and associations are excluded by the use of “then shall two be in the field,” and the connection with the day of His coming as parallel with that of the Flood.

If the one to be taken from the “two in the field” exactly represents or comprises one-third of the community of Christ’s people, then forty-eight thousands are embraced in the reference, or ninety-six thousands in the “two in the field.” Neither in this nor in the two other forecasts of the pairs together is there the use of the masculine or feminine, since both sexes are involved. Some of these pairs will be men, others women, and others of both sexes, as manifest from the facts of the present Divine service. The belief of the “due truth” has separated from mere earthly friendships those eagerly embracing it, and divided many a family and home. The full vindication of the faith of each of Christ’s people by the verdict of His “shout” and the succeeding events of the “interval,” will have new results in the family associations and of former friendships with each. There will then be a cleaving to the ones to be translated by others now hostile or not favourably impressed with the things of faith, and which is reflected in the respective “pairs” of Christ’s prophecy.

Some illustration of the general estimate imposed on living mankind concerning the manifested people of Christ is presented in that of the Egyptians, and their final attitude to Moses and Israel, recorded in Exodus 11:3, chapter 12:35: “And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants, and in the sight of the people.” The multitudinous “pair” in the field of Christ’s forecast have some previous illustration in the single pair in the lesser “field” on the day of Elijah’s translation, but with marked differences. Elisha’s cleaving to the one to be translated that day, recorded in

2nd Kings 2:1-12, illustrates the order with the approximate forty-eight thousands of pairs "in the field" on the day of Christ's coming. But Elisha was a "man of God," and the witnesses of the translation of Christ's people are not, and are then conscious of their neglect in not becoming such, and of the glory to be shared by the ones they are with for the last time—until the new creation.

"Two shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left," is the second matter of the prophecy in Matt. 24:41, Luke 17:35. Since this also is an exact forecast, the mention of the associations of this "pair," as distinct from those of the preceding one, has the significance of *indoors*, and not outside in the "field." Of necessity there is the like broad significance in the forecast of these "two together," as with the "two in the field," and not any local nor mystical application. Those in the "field" are not "grinding together at the mill," and these latter are not "in the field."

Another "third" of the community to be translated that day is comprised in the "one to be taken" from the pair of this forecast. Some forty-eight thousands of "pairs" are thus indicated in it. It is reasonably involved that two-thirds of the earth are comprised in the references to these two-thirds of Christ's people, where it is day or where the sun is shining. Both these "thirds" are distinguished from the remaining one—both of the earth and of the people of Christ—in the forecast in Luke 17:34: "In that night there shall be two in one bed." Not any of this "third" are either in the field or grinding at the mill when the time of translation arrives.. All comprised in each "third" are in the domain appointed for that one and not only some of them. The like order obtains with all comprised in each "third," and which clearly indicates particular Divine arrangement with each individual as with each section.

Unlike the forecast of the "two in the field," that of the "two grinding together at the mill" indicates particular activities. The use of "grinding," as evidenced by the facts of the "interval" then ending, is quite apart from any association of secular employment and of worship. The ending of all secular employment with the ones to be transplanted is reached at the hearing of Christ's approving ver-

dict, and the succeeding "interval" is fully occupied in the remarkable "work of the Lord" appointed for all His people. The fact of the two references in Matt. 24:41, Luke 17:35, and to the "grinding together," being the only ones in the New Testament employing the term, further witnesses to the altogether isolated matter of this forecast. Not any others of the human race of previous times to that day have had any part in the like "grinding."

The ancient and primitive method of using hand "mill-stones" in the preparing of meal for home requirements finds several mention in the Old Testament Scriptures, and as a local expression of "grinding at the mill." But this crude method has not any place among modern peoples. With the ancients each household had its own "mill-stones," and the preparing of the meal by their means was generally the labour of women. This matter of ancient times is evidently responsible for the inserting of "women" in the Authorised Version of Matt. 24:41, Luke 17:35, apart from any use by Christ or sensible connection with the matter of His forecast. Moreover, the features of mere natural conditions, and of the unexpected in the matter of sudden translation of one of the "two grinding at the mill," are entirely absent in Christ's forecast. It is by Divine appointment and enlightenment that the thousands of pairs are busily engaged on that Day, in the isolated "grinding at the mill" forecasted.

The local significance of "grinding at the mill," as obtaining in ancient times, is the same in principle as that of Christ's forecast. This is an essential key to understanding, and for certainty as to that which He intended, combined with knowledge of the facts of affairs connected with Christ's coming and taking His people. Making provision for the home and those comprised in it, is the significance of "grinding at the mill" in its local meaning, and in that intended by Christ in His prophecy. Never since man was upon the earth has there been anything corresponding with the translation of the community of Christ's living people. And this isolated, tremendous event is responsible—with the associated matter of the abnormal state of things on earth to succeed it—for the exceptional taking into the Divine

counsels of His people in the regard of their homes and kindreds to be left that day.

Everyone to be translated has some home connections needing and receiving particular Divine instructions for their arrangements. Fathers and mothers with dependent children particularly need to be enlightened concerning that which is to obtain with them, how they are to be provided for, and what is to overtake them. The impending visitation on living mankind parallel with the Flood the more emphasises the necessity for this final arranging of the homes to be left that day. The one of each pair to be "left" at the taking of the other, and sharing in the "grinding together," is to co-operate in the arrangements made, and to be a witness of the translation. Remembrance of the numbers of homes to be left that day, of the numbers to be advised of the Divinely appointed and revealed arrangements for all these "homes" for their co-operation, brings recognition of another particular operation of Divine government during the troublous times coming on the earth.

In previous chapters of this work there is consideration of the workings of moral government in the past history of the people of God in periods of crisis, and of the results of the faith of these in God's dealings with their kindreds. Together with the illustrations noted in this regard there is the powerful one of "Rahab's faith," recorded in Joshua 2:12-21, Joshua 6:25, and which manifests the Divine estimate of "faithful" and its results on others, apart from any violation of the truth that "God has no respect to persons." The strong faith of Rahab was responsible for the preserving alive and from the impending destruction of all others in Jericho, her father, mother, brothers and sisters: "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had....because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." This was in a crisis like the illustrations with Noah and Abraham.

The Divine arrangements for the homes and kindreds of Christ's people to be translated, when revealed on that great day of the Lord's coming, will be abundantly satisfactory to each enlightened one **whatever their character**. The associating—in Matt. 24:41, Luke 17:35—of the one "third" of His people with like numbers of others in

"grinding together at the mill," has the definite connection of the time of translation. This both permits and involves that the other "thirds" translated from the "field" and their "beds" have previously completed their appointed arrangements with the respective "ones" present with them and to witness their translation. The reserving of final arrangements in this regard for the Day of Christ's coming must obtain with each of the "thirds" of the one community and not only with the one.

The particular "grinding" at the mill" indicated by Christ in His prophecy is thus limited to the ones to be translated that day, even though all others of then living mankind have part in another order of providing for their homes. Only the "two together" of His forecast can do the "grinding" He refers to. The preserving of a generation of minors from the visitation upon the adult generation will call forth Divine power and provision such as is without full illustration in all previous history. God will take care of the living children apart from consulting or advising the parents or guardians of these, like He did with the children born in the wilderness during the wasting away of their disobedient parents. "Israel in the wilderness" provides a small illustration of coming things all over the earth with living mankind in this regard. In Deut. 1:39 there are words which will have a universal duplicate in impending times: "Moreover, your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it."

The form of Christ's prophecy in Luke: 17, 34 suggests that in His estimate the translation of the "third" referred to in it is the most remarkable of all: "I tell you, in that night there shall be two in the one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." Apart from understanding of the revealed truths of this extensive "taking and leaving," that some forty-eight thousand beds are comprehended in the "one bed" mentioned, and as many in the respective "one to be taken and the other to be left," the forecast does not disclose its altogether remarkable character. Never in all previous history has there been a

night like "that night" will be both in arrangements and results. Only on "that night" will there be the threefold expression of the "shall be" of Christ's forecast. "There shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken; and the other shall be left."

The imperative applies to the two together in the "one bed that night." Never previously have these been in the "one bed." On that same night and in the same "third" of the earth there will be millions of beds occupied by pairs of sleepers in each. But not any of these have inclusion in Christ's forecast, since they are not of Divine arrangement, and do not present anything extraordinary. Of the respective "thirds" of the community of Christ's people on the day of His coming, assuredly this one to meet Him "that night" would, if free to make their own arrangements, choose different ones to those marked out for them by Christ. The desire to remain up and spend the time to the Lord's coming for them in prayer and worship would surely be the one of every individual.. This, manifestly, has bearing on the form of Christ's prophecy, "**I tell you, in that night there shall be two in the one bed.**"

The Divine purpose with this "third" requires that each individual constituent will lie down in bed that night, and that not one will lie down alone. Not any two "Philadelphiaans," even if husband and wife, will share the same bed. Where husband and wife share the one bed "that night," the one will be a "Philadelphian," and the other not. When that wonderful night arrives all comprised in this "third" of Christ's people will have completed the appointed arrangements under Divine guidance, and with joyous confidence anticipate the certain coming of the Lord before the Sun rises again. Their next view of day will be in the Divine Presence, at the same moment as with the constituents of the other two "thirds" from the field and from the mill. This "taking" at the one moment of time of the individual constituents of the "thirds" from all over the earth gives further and deeper significance to the beautiful words in 1st Thess. 4:17, 18: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. **Wherefore comfort one another with these words.**

